

The Irish Language in Ireland

From Goídel to globalisation

Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost

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The Irish Language in Ireland

Owing to the history of Ireland the scholarly debate which surrounds its language is somewhat overheated and often disengaged. This book seeks to change that by providing a study of the Irish language with a focus on contemporary society.

The author explains the significance of the Irish language in terms of a complex nexus of society, power, politics and identity. Building upon the history of academic debates in the field, the book traverses this interesting subject via an examination of the language in the two polities of Ireland through to the importance of the language in a contemporary globalised setting.

With impressive clarity and an authoritative scholarly voice, the author provides a book which will interest linguists, sociologists and policy-makers as well as those who keep up with the development of Ireland.

Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost is lecturer at the School of Welsh at Cardiff University.

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Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost, Llechwedd, S. Torannán’s day, 2004

Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAJ	Committee on the Administration of Justice
CCRU	Central Community Relations Unit
CILAR	Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research
DCALNI	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure Northern Ireland
DED	Department of Economic Development
DHSS	Department of Health and Social Services
DOENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EU	European Union
GCE	General Certificate in Education
HAQ	highest academic qualification
ICT	information and communication technology
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
ITÉ	Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann
LGD	local government district
LIS	language impact statement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NI	Northern Ireland
NIHRC	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NSMC	North–South Ministerial Council
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
RGNI	Registrar-General Northern Ireland
RTE	Radio Telefís Éireann
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force

Chronology of events

500–100BC	Approximate arrival of Goídelic (Irish language)
AD 431	Traditional date for arrival of Palladius
431	Beginning of the Annals of Ulster
400–450	Introduction of Latin
456	Traditional date for the arrival of St Patrick
550–600	Irish laws written down
580–680	Latin literature flourishes, including grammar and exegesis
790	First recorded Viking attacks on Ireland, introduction of Scandinavian/Norse language[s]
1148	Death of St Malachy whose reforms introduced continental-style monastic houses to Ireland
1167	Norman intervention, introduction of Norman French and English
1366	Statute of Kilkenny, official prohibition of the Irish language
1534–1610	Tudor and Stuart plantations, introduction of Scots language and reintroduction of English
c.1615	First part of Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis written
1632–1636	Annála Ríoghachta Éireann (Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, also known as the Annals of Four Masters) compiled
1644	Death of Seathrún Céitinn, author of Foras Feasa ar Éirinn (Groundwork of Knowledge of Ireland)
1654	Cromwellian settlements
1780	Cúirt an Meánoíche written
1845–1852	The Great Famine
1893	Foundation of Conradh na Gaeilge (Gaelic League), Douglas Hyde lecture
1904	Publication of Séadna by Ó Laoghaire
1915	Ard-Fheis of Conradh na Gaeilge
1922	Irish Free State recognises the Irish language as the first official language
1937	Irish language recognised as the national and the first official language in the revised constitution
1948	Publication of Cré na Cille by Ó Caidhín

1956	Creation of Roinn na Gaeltachta, first official delineation of Gaeltacht boundaries
1958	Publication of Gramadach na Gaeilge agus Litriú na Gaeilge: An Caighdeán Oifigiúil (Irish Grammar and Orthography: Official Standard)
1972	Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann established, Raidió na Gaeltachta established
1978	Foundation of Bord na Gaeilge
1981	Foundation of Údarás na Gaeltachta
1994	Creation of Teilifís na Gaeilge (now TG4)
1998	Irish language recognised in the Agreement
1999	Creation of An Foras Teanga and Foras na Gaeilge
2003	Official Languages Equalities Act

Evolution of Irish (all dates AD)

Proto or Archaic Old Irish (Ogam), 400–700

Old Irish, 650–900

Middle Irish, 900–1200

Classical Irish, 1200–1600

Modern Irish, 1600–present

Glossary of Irish language terms

- Bord na Gaeilge** The Irish Language Board
- Breac-Ghaeltacht** Partly Irish-speaking area, within or contiguous to the Gaeltacht
- Bunreacht na hÉireann** 1937 Constitution of the Republic of Ireland
- An Caighdeán Oifigiúil** Standardised form of the Irish language
- Conradh na Gaeilge** The Gaelic League
- Fíor-Ghaeltacht** Largely Irish-speaking area, within the Gaeltacht
- Foras na Gaeilge** The Irish Language Agency
- An Foras Teanga** The North–South Language Body
- Gaeltacht** Officially designated Irish-speaking area in the Republic of Ireland
- Gaeltachtaí** Plural form of Gaeltacht
- Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann** The Linguistics Institute of Ireland
- Raidió na Gaeltachta** Principal Irish language radio broadcaster
- Teilifís na Gaeilge** Irish-medium television channel (now TG4)
- Údarás na Gaeltachta** The Gaeltacht Authority, economic development agency

1 Introduction

Preliminaries

According to Fischer, ‘language is the ultimate measure of human society. More than any other of life’s faculties, it is language that tells us who we are, what we mean and where we are going’ (Fischer, 1999: 203); the case of the Irish language in Ireland exemplifies this *in extremis*. Almost from its inception as the subject of scholarly concern, the fate of the Irish language and that of Ireland, its people, the land and the state, have been locked together on a shared trajectory. Thus a statement on the Irish language was taken to be a statement upon the very nature of Irish society itself. As a result, much of the scholarly debate on the Irish language has been either dramatically overheated or pointedly disengaged. For example, the most significant works on the Irish language in the recent past have either engaged in a largely fruitless debate concerning the death, or otherwise, of the language or have failed to engage with the cutting edge of language in a sociological context; being the point at which scholarly exertions have meaningful societal impacts in terms of language policy and planning outcomes. In some cases where work does begin to engage with the real world it has tended to be strong on descriptive and narrative capacity but limited in its imaginative reach or ideological insight. However, the various contributions of the Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann (ITÉ), and in particular the work of Ó Riagáin, have set in place some of the foundations for developing a better understanding of the Irish language in social context. Also, more recent activity centring upon the work of the Coimisiún na Gaeltachta has the potential to contribute further to the transformation of this state of affairs. The Irish language tells us something about Irish society – ‘who we are, what we mean and where we are going’ – but it does not tell the whole story. We should instead seek to study the language on its own terms as it does not carry with it the burden of responsibility for the fate of the Irish, whoever they might be. However, while the fate of the Irish language is its own and its alone, the particulars of its trajectory have implications for Irish society in all sociological domains. It is with these implications that this study is

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concerned. Moreover, the desirability of that trajectory, and the extent to which one attempts to intervene, relates directly to the reading of such implications. The means and the effectiveness of that intervention depend upon understanding the specific mechanics of that trajectory in terms of a complex nexus of society, identity, power, politics and ideology. Therein lies the craft of language policy and planning.

It is the function of this study to begin to unravel the complex relationships between the Irish language and society in Ireland. This book is divided into a number of distinct parts. In the opening section, entitled 'Contexts', the work is situated in relation to significant scholarly debates regarding language and society. The principal methodological and intellectual concerns of the study are presented through a critical analysis of the following:

- 1 *Linguistic relativism* – that is, the view that a cultural system as a whole can be understood through its given linguistic system. The most assertive position on linguistic relativism argues that an individual's sense of reality is directly codified or systematised by language and that therefore one's experience of social reality is wholly determined by language. It is noted here that the position of language as world-view is modified by the contributions of Marxism and semiotics to the study of language in society whereby language and society are best conceived of as being set in a dialectic relationship in which the one mutually shapes the other.
- 2 *Habitus and discourse*. The mechanics of understanding language in society are set in relation to the work of Bourdieu on society. The key concepts in this regard are habitus, the market and language capital. The subjectivity of agency and structural objectivity are examined through the study of habitus and its structuring dispositions that shape behavioural outcomes or practices. It is also explained that the structuring properties of habitus are modified by discourse and contestation, thereby avoiding the potential intellectual cul-de-sac of determinism. Also, these concerns are related to the condition of post-modernity.
- 3 *Ethnicity*. This is noted as a common, key element to the models on language in society that are most widely used for the purposes of language policy and planning activities. The concept of ethnicity is examined in detail, and in particular with critical reference to work of A.D. Smith and the concept of *ethnie*. Here, the social constructivist and primordial dichotomy on ethnic identity is transcended. Also, ethnicity is situated in postmodernism as a term that is 'under erasure', with the work of Barth on ethnicity in 'streams of tradition' as an important point of reference.
- 4 *Power*. Following from the discussion on language in ethnicity the socio-political organisation of the *ethnie* as the nation-state is exam-

ined. The relationship between nationalist political ideology and historical empowerment of language as signifier of collective identity via nation-state is described and the associated discourse on national identity and assimilation analysed.

- 5 *Globalisation and polity.* It is noted that the various forces of globalisation, a key aspect of the postmodern condition, impact upon all social relations – cultural, economic and political. Globalisation is understood as comprising a number of key features – the stretching of social relations, the intensification of flows and interactions, the increasing interpenetration of global and local social processes, and the development of a transnational, global infrastructure. It is shown that a part of the impact of globalisation is the reconfiguration of the language, power and identity relations which are critical to language policy and planning practices.
- 6 *Ecology.* The notion of the ecology as a metaphor and as an ideal for language-society relations is taken as the starting point for a descriptive analysis of the key models on language in society – namely, the ethnolinguistic vitality model as proposed by Giles *et al.* and the ecological approach that informs the work of others such as Mühlhäusler, Nettle and Romaine; the most complete ecological model is that of Haarmann on language in a network of ecological relations. The utility of such models in accounting for a wide range of variables is recognised, including, for the former model, the issues of status, demography and institutional support and, for the latter model, a wide range of variables that are categorised variously as ethnodemographic, sociological, political, cultural, psychological, interactional and linguistic. In this study it is argued that ethnicity, which is a common feature of these different models, is insufficiently problematised and that a more robust critique of language in ethnicity, power and contestation is required.
- 7 *Critical ecolinguistics.* This study moves beyond the ecology as metaphor and ideal. Noting the place and function of competition and contestation in ecology, critical interrogations of an ecological approach to language in society are undertaken. Structuration theory is employed as a means of grounding the ecological metaphor in the social world. The key element to this is in the systematic ordering of societal rules and resources with action as the dynamic process whereby structure comes into being. The situating of language in this context means the adoption of a realist approach to language in ecological context, an approach that could be termed ‘critical ecolinguistics’ – an approach that is characterised by the problematisation of ethnicity and the engagement with notions of power and contestation.

Part I of the book, entitled ‘Histories’, comprises an overview of the Irish language in historical social context. In the chapter ‘The Early

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Historical to the Late Medieval Period' the advent of the language and its early Celtic identity are reviewed. The status of the language in this period is of interest, in particular through its juxtaposition in relation to Christian and non-Christian traditions. The initial impact of Latin and the subsequent shift from Latin to Irish in certain domains, along with the emergence of new language domains, are traced. The geographical extent and sociological reality of the Great Irishry are explored. The idea of Gaelic continuity and the transformations wrought by the invasion of the Vikings and the interventions of the Normans are interrogated. In doing so, a radical position on continuity is adopted, conceiving it in terms of a fusion of Gaelic, Norse and Norman elements during the High Middle Ages. Also, the debate on the Gaelic resurgence is revisited with a view to demonstrating the nature of the linguistic diversity of late medieval Ireland. The second of the 'Histories' is 'The Early Modern and Modern Period'. In this chapter, the traumatic experience of conquest and colonisation is examined. Beyond the immediate effect of warfare, dispossession and plantation, the importation of the Tudor revolution in government, with new language domains in administration and written law and also new institutions of government, is explored for its impact on the state and status of Irish. Also, relationships between the Irish language and social class, religion and ethnicity are examined, indicating that, in this period, the language was more significant as an indicator of socio-economic class than of ethnicity or nationality. In this chapter the processes of modernisation and industrialisation are examined for their impact upon the place of the Irish language in society during the course of the nineteenth century in particular. On a popular level, the reality of the diaspora is explored as a mechanism for the Anglicisation of Irish society based upon perceptions of the English language as a key tool for socio-economic emancipation. The various relationships between the Irish language and what may be broadly defined as Irish nationalism are studied. This includes an overview of the United Irishmen on conceptions of the Irish nation, the position of Daniel O'Connell on English as the language of politics, and Young Ireland and Romantic views on language and nationhood. The significance of the cultural revival of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth for redefining the symbolic power of the Irish language is examined, along with the association between the language and Irish nationalist separatism at that time.

Part II of the book, 'Contemporary Geographies', comprises an examination of the Irish language in the two polities on the island of Ireland. This work is divided between two chapters, 'The Republic of Ireland' and 'Northern Ireland' respectively. In the former the nature of the status of the Irish language as the national and official language of the state is analysed. The idea of state building is explored with reference to the role of the language in civic and ethnic forms of nationalism. Language policy and planning successes and failures are noted with particular reference to

the Gaeltacht. Critical observations are offered on the prospects for the continuity of the Irish language. In the chapter on the language in Northern Ireland (NI) the death and revival of the language during the course of the twentieth century are examined. A range of data are brought to bear in order to create an understanding of the levels of knowledge of the Irish language in NI, patterns of use of the language and the range of attitudes towards it in relation to a range of sociological factors. Part III of the book

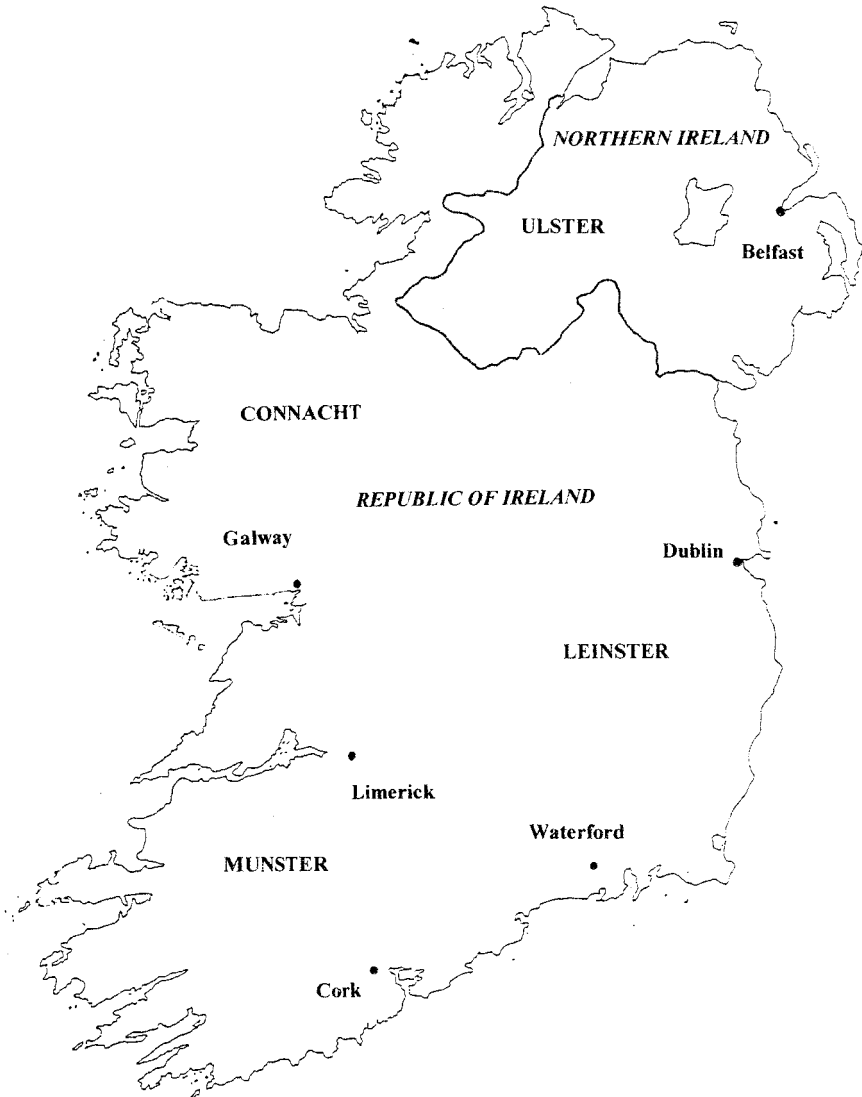


Figure 1.1 Ireland, showing international boundary, historical provinces and main cities.

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is entitled 'Discourse'. This includes two substantial chapters on 'New Directions' and 'Irish in a Global Age', and a brief concluding chapter. In 'New Directions' it is argued that the Irish language in Ireland, north and south, is on the cusp of dramatic change and that this change is related, in particular, to political developments in NI and socio-economic changes in the Republic of Ireland. The impact of the Celtic Tiger economy on the Gaeltacht and, in more general terms, the impact of increasing levels of materialism throughout Ireland upon ethnocentric concerns regarding the Irish language are considered. The significance to the language of the political settlement known as 'the Agreement' is assessed, including an analysis of the broader socio-political implications of the North-South Language Body. The prospects for greater levels of engagement between local Irish-speaking communities and the policy and planning processes are measured. Also, the nature of language planning discourse is examined with particular reference to decolonisation, cultural identity and human rights. In 'Irish in a Global Age' the association of the English language with the process of globalisation is considered for its impact on the Irish language. Theoretical insights are drawn from postmodernism in noting contemporary limitations on the extent to which issues on language in social context are usefully informed by Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus' and 'field'/'linguistic market'. Finally, the Irish language is located in relation to changing conceptions of identity and place in a globalising world of stretched social relations, diverse sources of loyalty, multiple levels of governance and a compressed sense of both time and space.

2 Contexts

Linguistic relativism

‘To say language is to say society’ (Lévi-Strauss in Duranti, 1997: 337) – the origins of language as world-view are to be found in the development of the discipline of anthropology in North America during the first part of the twentieth century. Here, it was believed that any given culture could only be studied through the language of that culture. This position, according to Boas, was a not only a practical issue, requiring anthropologists to acquire the language of the cultures they study, but also theoretical. He explains it as follows:

In all of the subjects mentioned heretofore, a knowledge of Indian languages serves as an important adjunct to a full understanding of the customs and beliefs of the people we are studying. But in all these cases the service which language lends us is first of all a practical one – a means of a clearer understanding of ethnological phenomena which in themselves have nothing to do with linguistic problems ... It seems, however, that a theoretical study of Indian languages is not less important than a practical knowledge of them; that the purely linguistic inquiry is part and parcel of a thorough investigation of the psychology of the peoples of the world. If ethnology is understood as the science dealing with the mental phenomena of the life of the people of the world, human language, one of the most important manifestations of mental life, would seem to belong naturally to the field of work of ethnology.

(Boas in Duranti, 1997: 52–3)

The principal methodological inference drawn from this perspective on the relationship between culture and language was that a culture’s language, or linguistic system, could be used to understand the cultural system itself as a whole. Kroeber puts it in the following terms:

In short, culture can probably function only on the basis of abstractions, and these in turn seem to be possible only through speech, or through a secondary substitute for spoken language such as writing,

numeration, mathematical and chemical notation, and the like. Culture, then, began when speech was present; and from then on, the enrichment of either meant the further development of the other.

(Kroeber, 1963: 102)

Based upon his observation that the diverse languages which he examined were employed to order and to classify the world in different ways, Boas arrived at the view that each given culture could only be understood in its own terms and, moreover, such classification was arbitrary or relative. Boas made the point in memorable fashion through reference to 'snow' in what he described as 'Eskimo' vocabulary:

It seems important . . . to emphasize the fact that the groups of ideas expressed by specific phonetic groups show very material differences in different languages, and do not conform by any means to the same principles of classification. To take again the example of English, we find that the idea of WATER is expressed in a great variety of forms: one term serves to express water as a LIQUID; another one, water in the form of a large expanse (LAKE); other, water as running in a large body or in a small body (RIVER and BROOK); still other terms express water in the form of RAIN, DEW, WAVE and FOAM. It is perfectly conceivable that this variety of ideas, each of which is expressed by a single independent term in English, might be expressed in other languages by derivation from the same term.

Another example of the same kind, the words for SNOW in Eskimo, may be given. Here we find one word, *aput*, expressing SNOW ON THE GROUND; another one, *qana*, FALLING SNOW; a third one, *piqsirpoq*, DRIFTING SNOW; and a fourth one, *qimuq-sug*, A SNOWDRIFT.

(Boas in Duranti, 1997: 55)

The implication of this is that experience of the world, or sense of reality, is directly codified or systematised by language. This position was extended further by Sapir, and subsequently Whorf, who postulated that if language has such a characteristic it could also induce the speakers of a given language to a view of the world that is particular to and indeed is derived from that language:

Language is a guide to 'social reality' . . . Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving problems of communication or reflection.

The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached . . . we see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

(Whorf in Mandelbaum, 1949: 162)

This position was formulated by Whorf as the principle of linguistic relativity. According to Whorf, the logical endpoint of the determining properties of language was that language did more than merely predispose certain possibilities on reality for the speakers of that language – it also encompassed the *only* world-view accessible to the speakers of that language. In his own words, the result of this was that

Users of markedly different grammars are pointed by the grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of extremely similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world.

(Whorf, 1956b: 221)

According to Whorf, a further result of this was that that the grammatical structure of all languages contains within them a metaphysics comprising the conceptual structure of the universe:

Thus, the Hopi language and culture conceals a metaphysics, such as our so-called naïve view of space and time does, or as the relativity theory does; yet it is a different metaphysics from either.

(Whorf, 1956a: 58)

In short, the most assertive versions of what is widely known as the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis state that a speaker of a particular language is determined by that language to a particular world-view. However, as Fasold points out (1990: 63–4) few scholars would concur with the strongest versions of the hypothesis while most would accept that linguistic relativism has, in general terms, some validity. The interventions of semiotics and Marxism on various disciplines, especially so in Europe, have been most instrumental in the retreat from the most assertive versions of linguistic relativism. Semiotics, understood as the study of the meaning of language conceived of as a system of signs, offers the insight that language is not a reflection of reality; it is instead a signifier of it. Language, to borrow from Eagleton (1991: 203), carves reality into conceptual space. This perspective on language problematises its relationship to social

reality whereby the two are interlocked – thus, language both shapes and is shaped by social reality. Or, as some would have it (Dittmar, 1976), language and society are conjoined in a dialectic *chez* Hegel. It is in this way that language as social artefact and artificer of social reality is central to a sense of place in the world. DeBernardi draws these threads together thus:

Contemporary ethnographic linguistics are driven by functional questions regarding the role of linguistic interaction in expressing social identity and shaping value. Research into the pragmatics of language use suggests that people not only speak about the world ‘out there’; they also create a good deal of their social reality in the very act of speaking. Thus the acquisition of a language is not only the internalization of a linguistic code, but also entails the learning of status and role, of appropriate social effect, and (ultimately) of worldview. Language provides both the foundation of a shared cultural identity and the means for the reproduction of social difference.

(DeBernardi, 1994: 861)

Habitus and discourse

With regard to how language operates in relation to particular properties of social reality that are of material concern to language policy and planning – such as status, power, community, economics – it is useful to turn to the work of Bourdieu. Two concepts are most important to understanding Bourdieu’s perspective on language in society. They are ‘habitus’ (pl. *habitus*) and ‘market’ (also referred to as ‘field’). Beginning with the latter, his concept of the market is conceived of as an economic marketplace that is structured by the relationship between producers and consumers. The market is a site of struggle in which the competitive capacity of agents is determined by the value of the capital that they possess. This capital can take various forms. This includes not only economic forms of capital but also cultural and symbolic forms. These forms are convertible and, as such, possess differing values in the market and from market to market for, according to Bourdieu, society as a whole is comprised of a series of markets – economic, political, legal, religious, linguistic. Thereby, linguistic competencies function as language capital with the market value of certain competencies, and indeed languages, varying from market to market according to the market value as ascertained by the key agents in the market, the producers and the consumers. In this way language behaviour varies according to the market value of those languages available to the market. As a result, particular languages and linguistic competencies have greater potential to yield advantage, or profit, than others. In short, in the linguistic market an individual will acquire, employ or adopt an attitude towards a language, languages, or linguistic competencies

which are most likely to accrue cultural, symbolic or other forms of capital in varying combinations.

The term *habitus* is derived from classical philosophical language where it is understood as an acquired ideal or perfect state or condition. For Bourdieu the meaning of the term relates to the environmental and other conditions that shape an individual in society. These conditions, or set of dispositions, predispose individuals to particular behaviours. These behaviours are likely to be held in common with the society within which the individual is situated. Also, such behaviours are subconscious patterns, taken for granted, governed by an unarticulated sense of appropriateness:

The *habitus* is a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are 'regular' without being consciously coordinated or governed by any 'rule'. The dispositions which constitute the *habitus* are inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable.

(Editor's Introduction in Bourdieu, 1991: 12)

A closer reading of the concept of *habitus* is necessary in order to understand how, as a set of dispositions, it is 'inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable' and how these properties of the *habitus* impact upon the individual and society. According to Bourdieu, the dispositions that comprise the *habitus* are gradually acquired by the individual from an early age, largely through the family unit and also the educational system. The result of this gradual acquisition is that ultimately all experience is filtered via these dispositions:

Unlike scientific estimations, which are corrected after each experiment in accordance with rigorous rules of calculation, practical estimates give disproportionate weight to early experiences: the structures characteristic of a determinate type of conditions of existence, through the economic and social necessity which they bring to bear on the relatively autonomous universe of family relationships, or more precisely, through the mediation of the specifically familial manifestations of this external necessity (sexual division of labour, domestic morality, cares, strife, tastes, etc.), produce the structures of the *habitus* which become in turn the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experience.

(Bourdieu, 1977: 78)

The set of dispositions which comprise the *habitus* are structured in that they reflect the social environment or conditions in which they are acquired. Also, while possibilities for variation in behavioural practice

exist, it is only in the context of the structuring properties that constitute the habitus:

The habitus, the durably instilled generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus.

(Bourdieu, 1977: 78)

The durability of the dispositions relates to them being embedded deeply in the individual to the extent that they are almost beyond consciousness. That is to say that the individual is largely unconscious of the nature of their operation. As a result of this profound embodiment, the set of dispositions are not readily accessible to self-aware determinations and therefore not easily capable of modification.

The habitus is the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures (e.g. of language, economy etc.) to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of durable dispositions, in the organisms (which one can, if one wishes, call individuals) lastingly subjected to the same conditions, and hence placed in the same material conditions of existence.

(Bourdieu, 1977: 85)

The dispositions are generative in that they facilitate the performance of a wide range of behaviours or practices. They are transposable in that the practices thus generated can be performed in areas other than those in which they originated. Also, whatever the various different experiences of individuals it is a function of the habitus to homogenise practices in whichever field they might be enacted. The effect of this is to reinforce the set of dispositions as societal norms, a practice that is taken for granted:

One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus is the production of a commonsense world endowed with the objectivity secured by consensus on meaning (*sens*) of practices and the world, in other words the harmonization of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective (in festivals for example), improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings), of similar or identical experiences. The homogeneity of habitus is what – within the limits of the group of agents possessing the schemes (of production and interpretation)

implied in their production – causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted.

(Bourdieu, 1977: 80)

It is in this sense too that the individual, society and social reality are the products of and the responses to an unproblematised and still active past. That this past is still active is significant for it is through this continuity of action that the past is embodied, internalised beyond consciousness, as if it were not history at all. Thereby, the temporal trajectory of the habitus is predisposed to continuity – the co-presence of past, present and future. It is also through the active presence of the past, according to Bourdieu, that contemporary practice is largely autonomous of the external stimuli of the present:

In short, the habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history. The system of dispositions – a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles, an internal law relaying the continuous exercise of the law of external necessities (irreducible to immediate conjunctural constraints) – is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism discerns in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis.

(Bourdieu, 1977: 82)

The habitus – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present.

(Bourdieu, 1990: 56)

More specifically with regard to language, Bourdieu asserts that the key concepts of habitus and market are of concern in a number of respects. The set of dispositions comprising habitus predispose speakers to a range of practices specific to language. Such speech acts relate to the linguistic capacity of individual speakers as pertaining to grammar and to their given social capacity in certain situations. These practices are also shaped by the expectations and demands of the market:

Every speech act and, more generally, every action, is a conjuncture, an encounter between independently casual series. On the one hand, there are the socially constructed dispositions of the linguistic habitus, which imply a certain propensity to speak and to say determinate things and a certain capacity to speak, which involves both the

linguistic capacities to generate an infinite number of grammatically correct discourses, and the social capacity to use this competence adequately in a determinate situation. On the other hand, there are the structures of the linguistic market, which impose themselves as a system of specific sanctions and censorships.

(Bourdieu, 1991: 37)

Bourdieu situates this perspective on language in habitus and market with regard to politically structured space. This dimension to his work is articulated in relation to the historical process of nation-state building in France, for which the revolution of 1789 is taken as a starting point. Bourdieu characterises the territorially bounded and politically sovereign nation-state as both habitus and market. The implications of this for language are significant as the modern nation-state, according to Bourdieu, requires that a single language be adopted as the language of state. This has the effect of driving the market value of the language of the nation-state dramatically upwards and that of all others, to varying degrees, downwards:

Thus, only when the making of the 'nation', an entirely abstract group based on law, creates new usages and functions does it become indispensable to forge a standard language, impersonal and anonymous like the official uses it has to serve, and by the same token to undertake the work of normalizing the products of the linguistic habitus.

(Bourdieu, 1991: 48)

In this way the language of the nation-state becomes a part of the fabric of habitus, a feature of the set of dispositions of which it is constituted. The embodiment of this language, to the exclusion of all others, makes it the taken-for-granted societal norm. Thereby, for individuals inculcated in the authoritative language of the state, understood as habitus, alternative speech acts are likely to be viewed as self-conscious diversions from the norm and may even be regarded as challenges to the common-sense perception of order and continuity that are inherent to the functioning of habitus. However, Bourdieu accounts for regional variation, such as that which exists in France, in terms of internal language markets. These can maintain their own specific values that are distinct from, but not autonomous of, the dominant market (e.g. Bourdieu, 1991: 97–102). The construction of such variation in markets relates directly to the process of nation-state building and, clearly, some language markets are more equal than others:

The official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and in its social uses. It is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language.

(Bourdieu, 1991: 45)

In this way, Bourdieu conceives of language as a system which is actively defined by socio-political processes and institutions. A further implication of this is that language can only be understood as a form of habitus and that the linguistic habitus conceals within it the traces of struggles, past and ongoing, for the empowerment of the other non-dominant languages by various agents:

A language only exists as a linguistic habitus, to be understood as a recurrent and habitual system of dispositions and expectations. A language is itself a set of practices that imply not only a particular system of words and grammatical rules, but also an often forgotten or hidden struggle over the symbolic power of a particular way of communicating.

(Duranti, 1997: 45)

Contestation is a central concern to language in society and it is important, at this point, to determine where this issue is situated in the work of Bourdieu. In the context of the intellectual challenge of postmodernity and the material challenge of globalisation, the issue of contestation is regarded as imperative. With regard to the postmodern condition the nature of the challenge is characterised by Jameson as follows:

There are, of course, ways of breaking out of this isolation, but they are not literary ways and require the complete and thoroughgoing transformation of our economic and social system, and the invention of new forms of collective living. Our task – specialists that we are in the reflections of things – is a more patient and modest, more diagnostic one. Yet even such a task as the analysis of literature and culture will come to nothing unless we keep the knowledge of our own historical situation vividly present to us: for we are, least of all, in our position, entitled to claim that we did not understand, that we thought all those things were real, that we had no way of knowing we were living in a cave.

(Jameson, 1975: 187)

How might one begin to see the walls of the cave? Bourdieu's position on language as a system that is actively defined by socio-political processes is not necessarily dependent upon conceptions of socio-political space as comprising a set of simple autonomous and durable units. The fixing of his exemplar linguistic habitus to a genesis at 1789 indicates the temporal and social contingency of the concept. Thus, while habitus is a 'stable, tradition-bound social order in which power is fully naturalized and unquestionable' (Eagleton, 1991: 157) it is also dynamic. The key to opening up its dynamism is the concept of 'doxa' and the related terms of 'heterodoxy' and 'orthodoxy'.

According to Bourdieu the properties of continuity that characterise the habitus are functions of the dialectic of subjective aspirations and objective structures. Arising from this are the practices of subjective agency that reflect the structuring dispositions of the objective system. When the two are perceived to be in total correspondence, whereby the sense of reality or of limits precludes the potential for other social possibilities, this condition or experience is termed 'doxa'. Such a condition in which the arbitrariness of society is wholly hidden from it by an overwhelming sense of its own naturalness is extreme. It is worth quoting extensively from Bourdieu on this point:

Every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalization of its own arbitrariness. Of all the mechanisms tending to produce this effect, the most important and best concealed is undoubtedly the dialectic of the objective chances and the agents' aspirations, out of which arises the *sense of limits*, commonly called the *sense of reality*, i.e. the correspondence between the objective classes and the internalized classes, social structures and mental structures, which is the basis of the most ineradicable adherence to the established order. Systems of classification which reproduce, in their own specific logic, the objective classes, i.e. their divisions by sex, age, or position in the relations of production, make their specific contribution to the reproduction of the power relations of which they are a product, by securing the misrecognition, and hence the recognition, of the arbitrariness on which they are based: in the extreme case, that is to say, when there is a quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization (as in ancient societies) the natural and social world appear as self-evident. This experience we shall call *doxa*, so as to distinguish it from an orthodox or heterodox belief implying awareness and recognition of the possibility of different antagonistic beliefs.

(Bourdieu, 1977: 164)

Contestation serves a crucial function in revealing the condition of doxa. This is achieved through the engagement of discourse. As Bourdieu puts it: 'the truth of doxa is only ever fully revealed when negatively constituted by the constitution of a *field of opinion*, the locus of the confrontation of competing discourses' (Bourdieu, 1977: 168). In this context, discourse may be regarded as the articulation of the potential for difference. Thus, the frontier between Bourdieu's universe of doxa and universe of discourse is situated between misrecognition and consciousness:

It can be seen that the boundary between the universe of (orthodox or heterodox) discourse and the universe of doxa, in the twofold sense of what goes without saying and what cannot be said for lack of an avail-

able discourse, represents the dividing-line between the most radical form of misrecognition and the awakening of political consciousness.
(Bourdieu, 1977: 170)

Moreover, it is a shifting frontier, subject to the dynamics of contestation driven by the awareness of disjointedness and the possibilities of diverse action. Language is central to this. For Bourdieu the relationship between language and society is at its least ambiguous when the awareness of disjointedness is at its most pointed. Under these circumstances he predicts the necessary emergence of an 'extraordinary discourse'. Thus, heterodoxy, as agency in the universe of discourse, reveals language as ideology:

The relationship between language and experience never appears more clearly than in crisis situations in which the everyday order (*Alltäglichkeit*) is challenged, and with it the language of order, situations which call for an extraordinary discourse (the *Ausseralltäglichkeit* which Weber presents as the decisive characteristic of charisma) capable of giving systematic expression to the gamut of extra-ordinary experiences that this, so to speak, objective *epoche* has provoked or made possible.

(Bourdieu, 1977: 170)

Language as ideology is a key feature of postmodernity. For some protagonists of postmodernism the notion of consciousness, as awakened political awareness, helps to explain the fragmentary nature of contemporary society and the resultant sense of isolation. According to Jameson the 'linguistic fragmentation of social life itself to the point where the norm is eclipsed' defines the condition (Jameson, 1991: 201). The resultant sense of crisis, Jameson claims, relates also to the fragmentation of community; for example: 'Objective reality – or the various possible objective realities – [is] in other words, the function of genuine group existence or collective vitality; and when the dominant group disintegrates, so also does the certainty of some common truth or being' (Jameson, 1975: 178–9). Therefore, the disintegration of dominant norms accounts for the social fragmentation which is inherent in the contemporary system and this crisis of language and collective identity has broad and profound socio-political implications:

Modernist styles thereby became postmodernist codes: and ... [t]he stupendous proliferation of social codes today into professional and disciplinary jargons, but also into the badges of affirmation of ethnic, gender, race, religious, and class-fraction adhesion, is also a political phenomenon, [as] the problem of micropolitics sufficiently demonstrates. If the ideas of a ruling class were once the dominant (or hegemonic) ideology of bourgeois society, the advanced capitalist countries

today are now a field of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm. Faceless masters continue to inflect the economic strategies which constrain our existences, but no longer need to impose their speech (or are henceforth unable to); and the postliteracy of the late capital world reflects, not only the absence of any great collective project, but also the unavailability of the older national language itself.

(Jameson, 1991: 201)

The erosion of the hegemony of a dominant group and the resultant contraction of the universe of doxa exposes the arbitrariness of society. In this new context power can no longer be legitimised and imposed through unspoken rules and symbolic violence. Instead, power is shown to be a construct that requires active as opposed to tacit endorsement. This is particularly salient to this study, given the history of contestation over what constitutes a legitimate polity in Ireland, noting the civil war of the early twentieth century upon which contemporary political practices (in the sense of Bourdieu) in the Republic of Ireland are based and the ethnic conflict of the late twentieth century in NI which is currently being given expression through a fractious political process. An inference that may be immediately drawn from this is that the contemporary challenge in the Irish context is to a particular view of nation-state hegemony, and the place of the Irish language in Irish society is a significant part of this challenge. To put it another way, the contemporary contestation of hegemony that is a feature of postmodern societies and the resulting redefinition of the social specifics of cultural and symbolic capital will, of necessity, determine afresh the capital value of the Irish language. Moreover, if one is to concur with Bourdieu on the operation of language capital then it is the case that language contestation is not the exclusive struggle of language-obsessed myopics; rather, it is nothing less than the struggle over the very nature of society itself:

Those who seek to defend a threatened linguistic capital, such as a knowledge of the classical languages in present-day France, are obliged to wage a total struggle. One cannot save the *value* of a competence unless one saves the market, in other words, the whole set of political and social conditions of production of the producers/consumers.

(Bourdieu, 1991: 57)

The discourse that is postmodernism is located in a sense of structural crisis. It is characterised by Eagleton, a leading critic of postmodernism, in the following terms:

Postmodernity is a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of univer-

sal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation. Against these Enlightenment norms, it sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable, indeterminate, a set of disunified cultures or interpretations which breed a degree of scepticism about the objectivity of truth, history and norms, the givenness of natures and the coherence of identities. This way of seeing, so some would claim, has real material conditions: it springs from an historic shift in the West to a new form of capitalism – to the ephemeral, decentralized world of technology, consumerism and the culture industry, in which the service, finance and information industries triumph over traditional manufacture, and classical class politics yield ground to a diffuse range of ‘identity politics’.

(Eagleton, 1996: vii)

Eagleton suggests that postmodernism eschews claims to authoritative discourse ‘single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation’. However, it is important not to overstate the extent to which the postmodern condition gestures towards anarchy. Jameson, for example, offers an escape from total subjectivity through conceiving of postmodernism as cultural dominant. This perspective on the discourse of postmodernism argues for the necessity for a ‘systematic cultural norm’ while at the same time making accommodation for diversity. Thereby, postmodernity may be regarded as a prism for the rigorous contemplation of emergent ‘radical cultural politics’ and the contemporary socio-political trajectory in general:

I have felt, however, that it was only in the light of some conception of a dominant cultural logic or hegemonic norm that genuine difference could be measured and assessed. I am very far from feeling that all cultural production today is ‘postmodern’ in the broad sense I will be conferring on this term. The postmodern however is the force field in which very different kinds of cultural impulses – what Raymond Williams has usefully termed ‘residual’ and ‘emergent’ forms of cultural reproduction – must make their way. If we do not achieve some general sense of a cultural dominant, then we all fall back into a view of present history as sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of forces whose effectivity is undecidable. This has been at any rate the political spirit in which the following analysis was devised: to project some conception of a new systemic cultural norm and its reproduction, in order to reflect more adequately on the most effective forms of any radical cultural politics today.

(Jameson, 1991: 193)

In this way the postmodern condition is situated in the universe of discourse and heterodoxy. Its key features, comprising the awareness of

structural crisis, the conscious knowledge of the manipulation of ritual, and the realisation of the possibilities for the transgression of anachronistic norms, are notions that are familiar to the work of Bourdieu. In this context, the potential for the radical transformation habitus, of the individual and the collective, may be regarded as being at its greatest. In periods of rupture, such as at present, the structural continuity of habitus is under challenge. With its erosion, or fracturing even, there exists the potential for the emergence of diverse structural dispositions, and some of these will be contradictory. Under such material conditions, in which agency is differentially oriented in relation to the diversity of structural dispositions of a radical and contested present, it is transformation rather than continuity that is foregrounded. According to the discourse of post-modernity this transformation can neither be nostalgic nor parochial; it must be, as Jameson puts it,

An aesthetic of cognitive mapping – a pedagogical culture which seeks to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system – will necessarily have to respect this now enormously complex representational dialectic and to invent radically new forms in order to do it justice. This is not, then, a call for a return to some older kind of machinery, some older and more transparent national space, or some more traditional and reassuring perspectival or mimetic enclave: the new political art – if it is indeed possible at all – will have to hold to the truth of postmodernism, that is to say, to its fundamental object – the world space of multinational capital.

(Jameson, 1991: 232)

The implication for language is the reshaping of its relationship to the individual, society and space. This may mean that language contributes to the socio-political disorientation that is characteristic of this age ‘an exhilarated vision of ceaseless difference, mobility, disruption’ (Eagleton, 1996: 3–4). On a more empirical level, Phillipson notes (1999: 95–7) that ‘Western concepts of language and ethnicity fail to capture the reality of complex, fluid and plural cultural and linguistic identities in many post-colonial contexts, both in Asia and in Africa’, and that in Europe ‘new forms of political and cultural devolution and autonomy are being devised’, and that these innovations are ‘leading to new forms of post-national identity ... at individual, group and state levels’. Equally, it is in such contexts that DeBernardi asserts that language actively engages not with homology and autonomy but instead with heterogeneity and overlap: ‘Language is profoundly social, and language use both constitutes shared worlds and realizes social diversity in practice’ (DeBernardi, 1994: 883).

In the Irish context, the challenge to the structural continuity of the habitus and of the market by these postmodern shifts is very substantial. Bearing in mind the importance of the process of nation-state formation

and its continuity to the work of Bourdieu, the contemporary interrogation of polity in Ireland by the various social, economic, cultural and political processes associated with globalisation, as well as the continuing threat of resurgent ethnic nationalism, underscores both the potential for and the momentum towards profound change. This points towards the emergence of a new set of structuring dispositions and of an alternative range of capital values; that is, the forging of novel perspectives and practices in relation to the Irish language in Ireland.

Ethnicity

The matter of ethnicity has been alluded to several times already in this study. It is a recurring theme. Issues regarding identity and ethnicity are, in various ways, of significance to postmodern thought, the sociology of language and scholarly considerations of the nature of Irish society. As this work is primarily concerned with particular issues on Irish language policy and planning then it follows that ethnicity demands some further consideration at this stage. The term 'ethnicity' appears to have only entered academic vocabulary as recently as the 1970s. Some claim its recording as a 'new term' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1972 (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975: 1). Its newness may explain some of the difficulties that remain in arriving at a definitive understanding of the term. For example, Connor remarks upon the considerable ambiguity which pertains to the term 'ethnicity' and other related concepts as follows:

With nationalism pre-empted, authorities have had difficulty agreeing on a term to describe the loyalty of segments of a state's population to their particular nation. Ethnicity, primordialism, pluralism, tribalism, regionalism, communalism, and parochialism are among the most commonly encountered. This varied vocabulary further impedes an understanding of nationalism by creating the impression that each is describing a separate phenomenon.

(Connor, 1978: 386)

Indeed, others writing at that time noted that most other writers used the term in their work without offering to define what they considered it to mean (e.g. Isajiw, 1980). More recently, May (2001) has shown that there existed certain widely held presumptions with regard to the meaning of the term 'ethnicity'. He puts it as follows: 'If a particular view of ethnicity was assumed in these studies it tended to accord de facto with the "cultural stuff" of ethnicity – ancestry, culture and language' (May, 2001: 26).

The volume of scholarly writings in the area of ethnicity expanded substantially in the period of the last quarter of the twentieth century, broadening our understanding of the term as the result of various different

insights into the nature of ethnicity. For the purposes of this study it is not possible to present an exhaustive analysis of the historical development of the term. However, it is essential that the term be as closely defined as is possible through reference to the more significant contributions to understandings of ethnicity.

It can be said that much of the work on developing an understanding of ethnicity has turned upon two distinct and wholly incompatible positions on ethnicity. These positions are termed 'primordial', on the one hand, and 'instrumental' or 'social constructivist', on the other. In brief, it is the primordial view that ethnicity constitutes a fundamental feature of society that is both natural and unalienable. That is to say that all individuals possess, and indeed are defined by, a certain fixed sense of ethnicity from birth. That single, same ethnic identity is carried by all with them until death. Therefore, the primordialist position is that ethnicity is defined by fixed cultural and biological heritages and that it is territorially rooted. In historical terms this perspective on the nature of ethnic identity is most closely associated with the Romantic nationalism of Humboldt, Herder and Fichte whereby the German *Volk* was defined by 'language, blood and soil'. The more recent development of the primordial position on ethnicity, following Geertz, moves away from the view that these attachments in language, blood and soil are primordial in any *real* sense. It is argued instead that such attachments are *perceived* to be primordial by the ethnic group. In this way, therefore, the actions of individual members of ethnic groups are rooted in their earliest socialisation as ethnic group members and arise from specific and exclusive primordial ties:

By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the 'givens' of existence, or more precisely ... the assumed givens of social existence: immediate contiguity and live connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular ... community, speaking a particular language ... and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. One is bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbour ... as the result not merely of personal affection, tactical necessity, common interest or incurred moral obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself.

(Geertz, 1973: 259)

The social constructivist critique of the primordial position characterises it as a form of cultural determinism. Thereby, it is argued that the primordial approach does not adequately explain the evolution of the sense of ethnicity held by groups over time as ethnic groups manifestly place emphasis at certain times upon some certain ethnic attributes while at certain other

times emphasis is placed on other different attributes of ethnicity. In short, the primordial position fails to account for the variations, complexities and multiplicities of identity pertaining to the individual as well as the collective. The social constructivist position on ethnicity stands in sharp contrast to the primordial view in which ethnicity is largely shaped by fixed objective social constraints. Central to the social constructivist position on ethnicity is that of agency. It is through subjective social action that ethnic identity is constructed. Agency variously operates to this effect. For example, Barth argues that ethnic groups are not defined by certain fixed attributes, be they grounded in culture, biology or place, but instead through their relationships to other groups:

[E]thnic categories provide an organisational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different sociocultural systems ... The critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses.

(Barth, 1969: 14–15)

That is to say that while certain, specific attributes become significant markers of ethnicity it is not as a result of their intrinsic quality; instead, it is because of their relevance in signalling difference to other ethnic groups. Therefore, it is the function of certain, specific attributes to define and to maintain senses of difference between ethnic groups. In this way, ethnic groups are the products of the boundaries that result from the identification of difference. The cultural content, as it were, of an ethnic group is explained as a construct of the collective members of the group and is a function of the relationship between them and other collectivities. In this sense ethnicity is a social resource which is manipulated by and in the interests of the ethnic group and its individual members. Worsley puts it as follows: 'Cultural traits are not absolutes or simply intellectual categories, but are invoked to provide identities which legitimise claims to rights. They are strategies or weapons in competitions over scarce social goods' (Worsley, 1984: 249).

Perceiving ethnicity as a construct and the ethnic group as a collective of mutual self-interest can explain both the continuity and the change that can be ascribed to ethnic group identity. The social constructivist position also explains why ethnicity has been such a durable mechanism for socio-political mobilisation. The competitive efficacy of strategies and tools with regard to the acquisition of resources is critical to the material well-being of the collective. The effectiveness of such strategies and tools depends upon the capacity for the group to mobilise its members. In this context the various attributes of ethnicity must be capable of being manipulated so as to adapt the group's strategies or tools to the particular discourse that is shaping competition for resources. In short, it is necessary to be able to

mobilise the group on the basis of any ethnic attribute that is of instrumental value according to the given socio-political circumstances.

The strongest versions of the social constructivist position contend that ethnicity is based upon claims to cultural and other attributes that are of spurious authenticity. Ethnic identity is, in the literal sense, an invented tradition (e.g. Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). It is argued that an individual or group in order to acquire resources will behave in the manner most likely to maximise the amount of resources that could be available to them. They will be sensitive to the market value and advantages ascribed to specific ethnic attributes and will seek to deploy or to cast aside certain attributes in accordance with their obtaining optimal profit in the market. Hence, ethnicity is nothing other than a device or commodity to be exchanged in the pursuit of self-interest. Ethnic identity is thereby taken into possession from within a hierarchy of ethnic and other attributes, any of which may be forefronted according to the demands of circumstance. The instrumental and situational contingency of ethnicity is thus put by Nagel: '[The] chosen ethnic identity is determined by the individual's perception of its meaning to different audiences, its salience in different social contexts, and its utility in different settings' (Nagel, 1994: 155).

The resultant dichotomy between these two positions on ethnicity gives rise to a conceptual poverty which A.D. Smith describes as follows:

By fixing attention mainly on the great dimensions and 'fault lines' of religion, customs, language and institutions, we run the risk of treating ethnicity as something primordial and fixed. By concentrating solely on the attitudes and sentiments and political movements of specific *ethnie* or ethnic fragments, we risk being so caught up in the day-to-day ebb and flow of ethnic phenomena that we see them as wholly dependant [*sic*] 'tools' or 'boundary markers' of other social and economic forces.

(Smith, 1986: 211)

In seeking a resolution of both the acute subjectivity of the instrumentalist position and the rigid objectivity of the primordialist position on ethnicity, the explanatory framework on the ethnic origins of modern nations as devised by A.D. Smith is a critical point of reference. He suggests that the idea of ethnicity is more usefully approached through the notion of national identity and its development in the modern historical period in Europe, and certain parts of Western Europe in particular. According to Smith modern nations possess ethnic roots which extend into the ancient past. Thus, the identity of a nation arises from its ethnic historicity and its particular identities, cultures and values. This premodern ethnic historicity is characterised by a range of subjective factors which are '[the] permanent cultural attributes of memory, value, myth and symbolism' (Smith, 1986: 3). Smith argues that, through adopting a 'symbolic' position on ethnicity,

the primordialist and instrumentalist dichotomy on ethnicity may be transcended. This is accomplished through

[A]ttending to the complex of myths, symbols, memories and values that are handed down the generations of collectivities and which define them to themselves and those outside, we can treat *ethnie* as both mutable and durable at the same time, and ethnicity as both fluctuating and recurrent in history. Ethnicity and *ethnie* are no longer purely static attributes of humanity; but neither are they the instruments of other forces or boundary mechanisms of otherwise fluid cultures.

(Smith, 1986: 211)

The ethnic community, or '*ethnie*' (pl. *ethnies*), is defined both by its historical continuity and its capacity for transformation. Its key features are the ascription of a collective proper name for the group, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, various peculiar elements of a common culture, an association with a homeland and a sense of solidarity. In this way Smith pays due to both the 'cultural stuff' of ethnicity and the function of agency upon it:

[Ethnicity] relates mainly to a sense of communality based on history and culture, rather than to any collectivity or to the concept of ideology. In this, I follow the emendation proposed by Epstein to the literature of 'situational' ethnicity in which the growth of a sense of the collective self is treated as an important part of a group (especially ethnic) identity and solidarity. Only here, the sense of self is viewed through the prism of symbols and mythologies of the community's heritage ... the core of ethnicity, as it has been transmitted in the historical record and as it shapes individual experience, resides in this quartet of 'myths, memories, values and symbols' and in the characteristic forms and styles and genres of certain historical configurations of populations.

(Smith, 1986: 14–15)

That said, it would appear from the work of Smith that the *ethnie*, being a particular mode of organising ethnicity, is historically specific. According to Smith it is a premodern phenomenon. For example, he contrasts 'the collective cultural units and sentiments of previous eras' (*ethnies*) with 'modern national units' (Smith, 1986: 13). Elsewhere, nation and *ethnie* are situated in chronological fashion:

[W]e may not find 'nations' in pre-modern epochs, at least not in the mass, legal, public and territorial form they took in recent centuries. On the other hand, we do find a number of looser collective cultural

units, which we may call *ethnies*, and which we can define as 'named units of population with common ancestry myths and historical memories, elements of shared culture, some link with a historic territory and some measure of solidarity, at least among their elites'.

(Smith, 1995: 57)

It follows that the modern vehicle for the *ethnie* is the nation. In this manner the nation is the product of the *ethnie* and the nation defines the authenticity and legitimacy of its socio-cultural tradition via ethnicity through its association with the historically and geographically specific *ethnie*:

If nations are modern, at least as mass phenomena legitimated by nationalist ideology, they owe much of their present form and character to pre-existing ethnic ties which stemmed from earlier *ethnies* in the relevant area.

(Smith, 1995: 57)

Thus, it can be said that the modern condition of ethnicity is the nation-state, and that the process of modernisation, characterised by industrialisation, the bureaucratic state, mass education, print technology and secularisation, may be regarded as the mechanism through which an *ethnie* becomes a nation-state. By implication, the failure of a given *ethnie*, under the conditions of modernity, to respond to the challenge of change is likely to be fatal to its continuity beyond the transition to the modern era. Smith underlines the point regarding the potentially terminal result to the challenge of modernity for *ethnies*:

In one very important sense, the old classical notion of a transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* finds confirmation in the more limited but vital sphere of ethnicity: in the modern era, *ethnie* must become politicized, must enter and remain in the political arena, and must begin to move towards nationhood, even if they have no intention of becoming full nations themselves. That is to say, they are forced to forsake their former isolation, passivity and cultural accommodation, and become activist, mobilized and politically dynamic. In order to survive, *ethnie* must take on some of the attributes of nationhood, and adopt a civic model; to that extent, they take on some of the attributes of *Gesellschaft*, with its features of rational political centralization, mass literacy and social mobilization.

(Smith, 1986: 157)

If it is accepted that the postmodern condition is a contemporary form of such a transition then the same principle would apply to challenge the continuity of the current organisational forms of ethnicity. According to some,

the erosion of the exclusive hegemony of the nation-state and the deconstruction of national identity has been accompanied by the emergence of new sites for ethnicity at global and local levels, while recognising also that the nation-state and national identity remain potent ideas. For example:

National identities remain strong, especially with respect to such things as legal and citizenship rights, but local, regional, and community identities have become more significant. Above the level of national culture, 'global' identifications begin to displace, and sometimes override, national ones.

(Hall, 1992: 302)

Important critics of the postmodern position in this regard argue that the emphasis on the fragmentation of identity, its rootlessness and its contingent nature, understates the durable appeal of ethnicity. For example, May argues robustly that the disregard for the notion of historical continuity in ethnic, cultural and linguistic terms means that the situational perspective on ethnicity is over-inflated by some proponents of post-modernism (May, 2001: 39). He notes:

The fragmented, dispersed and decentred individual of the postmodern world is supposedly able to choose from a bewildering range of identity styles and forms of political mobilisation, and ethnicity, it seems, is just one of them . . . [T]his position significantly understates the key role that ethnicity often assumes in the processes of identity formation and social and political mobilisation.

(May, 2001: 24)

One may concur with May that the range of possibilities available to individuals in relation to ethnic identity will vary according to circumstance and that the opportunities open to some will be more limited than for others. For example, in the context of contemporary USA: 'A white American may have a wide range of ethnic options from which to choose on the basis of their ancestry. An African American, in contrast, is confronted with essentially one ethnic choice – black' (May, 2001: 40). Such limitations lie, in part, in the structural constraints set by others. Nagel puts it as follows:

[T]he extent to which ethnicity can be freely constructed by individuals or groups is quite narrow when compulsory ethnic categories are imposed by others. Such limits on ethnic formation can be official or unofficial. In either case, externally enforced ethnic boundaries can be powerful determinants of both the content and meaning of particular ethnicities.

(Nagel, 1994: 156)

If it is accepted, then, that ethnicity cannot be considered to be ‘a completely arbitrary construct’ (Roosens, 1989: 156) it follows that the strong version of postmodernity that May critiques is not sustainable. That said, Roosens (1989: 156) and others also recognise the fundamental ambiguity or elasticity of ethnic identity that is, according to Eriksen, related to ‘a negotiable history and a negotiable cultural content’ (Eriksen, 1993: 73). In order to identify the extent of durability and contingency inherent to ethnicity it is useful to return to the work of Barth (1969) on ethnicity as the social organisation of cultural difference mediated by stable social interactions across group boundaries. Barth made it clear that the nature of the organisation of ethnicity is historically specific:

These modern variants for poly-ethnic organization emerge in a world of bureaucratic administration, developed communications, and progressive urbanization. Clearly, under radically different circumstances, the critical factors in the definition and maintenance of ethnic boundaries would be different.

(Barth, 1969: 35–6)

He also pointed out that despite the structuring properties of ethnic boundaries in creating dichotomised ethnic neighbours his fieldwork revealed that many ‘do not tend to sort themselves out in this way’ (Barth, 1969: 29). Clearly, he pursued this apparent anomaly for in more recent work (1984) Barth argues for the necessity of further conceptual insights with regard to ethnicity and the functioning of boundaries. Mechanisms other than simple, exclusive boundaries were at work and whatever the novel concepts they

should serve to emphasize properties both of separability and interpenetration, suggested perhaps by an imagery of streams, or currents within a river: distinctly there, powerful in transporting objects and creating whirlpools, yet only relative in their distinctiveness and ephemeral in their unity.

(Barth, 1984: 80)

Barth offers a more recent (1998) reflection upon the position as previously formulated, in so far as the past, the ‘cultural stuff’ of ethnicity, is problematised as a key site for the authentic appropriation of meaning and identity:

[I]n our view of history we broke loose from the idea of history as simply the objective source and cause of ethnicity and approached it as a form of synchronic rhetoric – a struggle to appropriate the past, as one might say today.

(Barth, [1969] 1998: 6)

In this, his language carries some echoes of postmodernity in which the 'cultural stuff' of ethnicity is a resource to be drawn upon and deployed in accordance with the interests of the individual and collective under the given circumstances. Hall, for example, terms it as a matter of strategy in which 'identities are questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being' (1996: 4). In the context of the historical contingency of Barth's model, it is significant that he argues that institutions, including the nation-state as a macro-institution as well as the institutions of a given state, operate in such a manner as to constrain the meaningful expression of identity for minority ethnic groups. The result of this is an 'inadequacy of performance in the widest system' which 'brings about frustrations and crisis of identity' (Barth, 1969: 32). Given the changed historical circumstances of postmodernity, Barth (1998) revisits ethnicity and identifies an amorphous mechanism characterised as a stream of tradition at work upon ethnicity and causing the notion of the ethnic boundary to be refashioned:

Whereas my effort until now has been to emphasize the search for distinctions, for the fuller delimitation of the contradictions of pluralism, any closer and fuller analysis forces us to acknowledge the relativity of these boundaries, or rather the interpenetration and constant interchange implicit in the imagery of currents.

(Barth, [1969] 1998: 83)

Thus, a specific point can be drawn with regard to Barth's view on the function of boundaries in ethnicity. Equally, a more general point is implied: that the durability of the form of ethnicity under the conditions of postmodernity is contingent upon the particular responses of individuals and collectivities to the specifics of those conditions.

Power

Histories of the nation-state show that language has been a critical element in the negotiation of the condition of modernity and the transition from *ethnie* to nation-state, conceived of as a politically empowered ethnic group defined in large part by language. Language is a factor in the empowerment of those *ethnies* that were ultimately successful in meeting this challenge as a conduit for, as well as a source of, power. Chomsky puts it more even more bluntly in asserting that: '[q]uestions of language are basically questions of power' (Chomsky, 1979: 191). The passing of Germany to nation-statehood during the nineteenth century illustrates the point in principle if not by degree; as is indicated by others, the specifics of the pathway to the nation-state vary (e.g. Llobera, 1994). It is noted (Hobsbawm, 1992: 98–9), certainly from the period of the Enlightenment, that the German language was increasingly regarded by intellectuals and

nationalists alike as the most meaningful marker of German national identity. According to the form of Romanticism shaped by Humboldt, Herder and Fichte in the German context, it is a function of language to define the world-view for each individual speaker of the language as a member of the community of the speakers of that language in the form of a collective historical experience. That is, it is through the national language that the nation and its sense of place in the world and destiny in it is determined. From each language arises a nation and for that nation there exists an absolute right to statehood. As Fichte puts it:

[I]t is beyond doubt that, wherever a separate language can be found, there a separate nation exists, which has the right to take charge of its independent affairs and govern itself.

(Fichte, 1968: 184)

Thus the ancient and unique origins of the ethnic group can be revealed through the careful study of the national language, for hidden within its vocabulary, syntax and grammar resides the intimate knowledge of national self-awareness:

The art of tracing verbal roots, and explicating the meanings and synonyms of words and phrases, 'made sense' within a larger evolutionary framework in which language was seen as having an intimate and revelatory position within the collective memory and experience.

(Smith, 1986: 181)

As Smith notes, this view of language is exclusive and self-regarding and applies equally to other cultural forms:

In this 'inner' or 'Herderian' sense of language, ethnicity places limits on communicability. That is to say, collective historical experiences find a peculiar and unique medium of expression, a 'language' or 'style' all their own. This may be a resurrected and renovated ancient tongue, or a style of dress, furnishings and architecture, or a special music or dance, or peculiar customs, institutions and manners, which bind those who possess and practice them.

(Smith, 1986: 171)

This view of the relationships between language, nation and state, while varying in detail, was dominant in general across Europe during the modern historical period. The implications of this relationship between language and power for *ethnies* that do not respond to the challenge of modernity through the gaining of nation-statehood, and thereby fail to adapt effectively to the orthodox discourse on nationhood, is status as ethnic minorities within the nation-states of dominant *ethnies*. History

shows that the result can variously be assimilation, oppression, enforced exclusion or genocide.

It is a feature of the orthodox discourse on nationhood in this period that such non-historical peoples, to borrow a phrase of the time, would benefit from their being assimilated to the body of the metropolitan nation-state; a superior body in all respects. The views of Michelet on France crystallise this ideal. According to Michelet the French Revolution of 1789 gave birth to France as 'a whole nation, free from all distinction' (Michelet, 1967 [vol. 1]: 13). This freedom from distinction meant the necessary incorporation of the diverse regional identities of the country to that of the national identity of France:

[T]his sacrifice of the diverse interior nationalities to the great nationality which comprises them undoubtedly strengthened the latter ... It was at the moment when France suppressed within herself the divergent French countries that she proclaimed her high and original revelations.

(Michelet, 1973: 286)

This annihilation of difference is not only useful to the mechanics of the state but is an essential euphoric state through which the transcendental national spirit is released:

Where, then, are the old distinctions of provinces and races of men? Where those powerful and geographical contrasts? All have disappeared: geography itself is annihilated. There are no longer mountains, rivers or barriers between men ... All at once, and without even perceiving it, they have forgotten the things for which they would have sacrificed their lives the day before, their provincial sentiment, local tradition, and legends. Time and space, those material conditions to which life is subject, are no more. A strange *vita nuova*, one eminently spiritual ... is now beginning for France. It knew neither time nor space.

(Michelet, 1967 [vol. 1]: 444)

Similarly, the English liberal humanist position on diversity, and in particular diversity in language, impeded the development and operation of the institutions of the state and frustrated the coalescence of shared, popular values and common public views, necessary features of good governance. By implication, according to this orthodoxy linguistic diversity is contrary to freedom and democracy:

But, when a people are ripe for free institutions, there is a still more vital consideration. Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without

fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist.

(Mill, 1972: 361)

According to Mill the assimilation of the Welsh or the Scots to British national identity or, equally so, the Bretons or the Basques to French national identity, is not merely beneficial to the nation-state but, in addition, has many advantages for those peoples who might be assimilated. For example:

When proper allowance has been made for geographical exigencies, another more purely moral and social consideration offers itself. Experience proves it possible for one nationality to merge and be absorbed in another: and when it was originally an inferior and more backward portion of the human race the absorption is greatly to its advantage. Nobody can suppose that it is not beneficial to a Breton, or a Basque of French Navarre, to be brought into the current of ideas and feelings of a highly civilised and cultivated people – to be a member of the French nationality, admitted on equal terms to all the privileges of French citizenship, sharing the advantages of French protection, and the dignity and prestige of French power than to sulk on his own rocks, the half-savage relic of past times, revolving in his own mental orbit without participation or interest in the general movement of the world. The same remark applies to the Welshman or the Scottish highlander as members of the British nation.

(Mill, 1972: 395)

While very few would now argue that ‘half-savage’ minorities require to be drawn from their ‘rock’ dwellings in order that they might expand their rigidly narrow ‘mental orbit’, the dominant discourse on language and power in the modern period continues, in some quarters, to articulate the implicit superiority of some *ethnies* and their cultural attributes over others. In the modern period the differential use of the terms ‘ethnic’ and ‘nation’ developed to become a function of status and power. The term ‘ethnic’ became a signal of the lesser value of attributes other than those associated with the dominant *ethnie*. For example, according to Isajiw (1980) it is common to much of the literature on the subject of ethnicity in the USA that the appellation ‘ethnic’ is assumed to also be read as meaning ‘minority’. In this context the ‘ideal’ attributes of the dominant *ethnie* can be made normative through the apparatus of the state:

The European nation has, at least in principal, grown up around an ‘ideal’ of cultural homogeneity, established and reinforced through the state and controlled transmission of literate culture, alongside state

control over entry and the acquisition of citizenship; thus the nation represents territorialized cultural belonging, while the state formalizes and controls legal membership.

(Morris, 1997: 194)

Some commentators consider the operation of the apparatus of state on matters of citizenship, territory, culture and belonging in this manner to be rather benign. Miller considers that Switzerland and the United States of America are exemplars of such benign assimilation, for example:

Typically, though not always, a nation emerges from an ethnic community that furnishes it with its distinct identity . . . Even nations that originally had an exclusive ethnic character may come, over time, to embrace a multitude of different ethnicities. The clearest example of this is the American nation, originally ethnically Anglo-Saxon, but now incorporating Irish-Americans, Italian-Americans, and many other such hyphenated groups.

(Miller, 1995: 19–20)

[H]istorically, national identities have very often developed out of prior ethnic identities, and where a cohesive ethnic group finds that its legitimate claims are ignored by the state, a natural response is for the group to begin to think of itself as an alternative nationality. But, equally, such a development is not pre-ordained. It is quite possible for a state to include several groups with several ethnic identities but a common national identity: Switzerland and the United States are both in their different ways good examples of this.

(Miller, 1995: 112–13)

During the latter part of the twentieth century multicultural policies were devised by various nation-states in order to ameliorate to the homogenising effect of their historical practices in relation to minority ethnic groups within their borders. However, while the multicultural project embraces the rhetoric of diversity, some commentators suggest certain inherent contradictions (e.g. Baumann, 1996). For example, Favell argues that while, through the implementation of multicultural policy, particular rights may be assigned to minority ethnic groups and certain resources may be allocated to them, this is but another form of assimilation:

[E]thnic minorities are offered cultural tolerance, even ‘multicultural’ rights and institutions, in exchange for acceptance of basic principles and the rule of law; they are imagined as culturally-laden social groups, who need to be integrated and individualised by a public sphere which offers voice and participation, transforming them from

'immigrants', into full and free 'citizens'; they are to become full, assimilated nationals, in a nation-state re-imagined to balance cultural diversity, with a formal equality of status and membership.

(Favell, 1998: 213–14)

What this means is that multiculturalism does not enable the transformation of the relationship between language and power that is characteristic of the condition of modernity. Instead of contesting the presumed legitimacy and authenticity of the essential cultural attributes of the nation-state, it too turns upon an essentialist approach to the matter:

In this set of understandings, 'culture' is: a kind of package (often talked of as migrants' 'cultural baggage') of collective behavioural-moral-aesthetic traits and 'customs', rather mysteriously transmitted between generations, best suited to particular geographical locations yet largely unaffected by history of a change of context, which instils a discrete quality into the feelings, values, practices, social relationships, predilections and intrinsic nature of all who 'belong to (a particular) it'.

(Vertovec, 1996: 51)

While some significant reworking of the multicultural project has occurred (e.g. King, 2000; May, 2001; Parekh Report, 2000), multiculturalism commentators assert that it persists in its engagement with a simple, modern conception of the nation-state. For example, Vertovec observes that:

Multiculturalism did away with the expectation of assimilation and acculturation, while the expectation of common attachment to the encompassing nation-state went unchallenged ... Multiculturalism's relationship to the nation-state ... seems to remain as was.

(Vertovec, 2001: 5, 6)

Equally crucially, according to others (e.g. Alibhai-Brown, 2000), it fails to engage with postmodern thought and the material conditions of globalisation.

Globalisation and polity

Accounting for the place of language in relation to the postmodern condition is a central issue. Postmodernity is characterised by society in a state of flux, instability and fracture. Society conceived of as stable, bounded and homogeneous is a critical point of reference with regard to understanding Bourdieu's notion of habitus and market. In sociological terms, language and the modern nation-state may be viewed in a straightforward

manner thus: 'The single linguistic community, or the unified linguistic market, to which Bourdieu refers is most clearly represented in and by the homogeneous civic culture of the modern nation-state' (May, 2001: 156).

Dynamism is also a feature of Bourdieu's conception of language in society. The historical conjuncture, or fracture, between the premodern and the modern that is critical to Smith's understanding of the transformation of *ethnies* into nations is explained in terms of discourse and the reshaping of the set of dispositions that constitute the habitus. Under the challenge of globalisation, the erosion of the hegemony of the nation-state as the most authoritative form of polity suggests that it is pertinent to ask whether the present historical conjuncture signals the onset of a decisive assault upon the structuring dispositions of the modern habitus. The impact of the so-called 'postmodern anxiety' upon language in society as it relates to issues of identity and power is a key concern for this study, for Irish society is increasingly a globalising, postmodern society.

'Globalisation' is a term often associated with the myriad and rapid changes that much of the world is currently experiencing. Its meaning relates to a number of issues, including more extensive global interconnectedness, a reconfiguration of interactions between local and global processes and increasing organisation and exercise of power at a local level. While globalisation can be seen as a threat to local identities and cultures, these can be seen to be refashioned through globalisation in reinvigorating ways. Also, globalisation may be described as a multidimensional process that incorporates all social relations – cultural, economic and political – and, as such, its effects can be seen in all aspects of society. Notwithstanding the complexity of globalisation, and the diversity of its impact upon society, it may be seen to comprise a number of characteristic features. According to Cochrane and Pain (2000: 15–22), these are as follows:

- 1 *Stretched social relations* – that is, the existence of cultural, economic and political networks of connection that are global in their extent. These transcend nation-state boundaries and are especially manifest in the phenomenon of regionalisation; that is, the increased interconnection between states that border on each other. Also, the individual is positioned in this network of interconnection in such a way that apparently local actions might have global consequences.
- 2 *Intensification of flows and interactions*. This stretching of social relations appears to be related to an increased density of interaction across the globe, in turn implying that the impacts of actions are greater than before. Also, the density of contemporary communication connects distant actions, decisions, people and events in an immediate shared social space, a space that is virtual rather than physical or territorial.
- 3 *Increasing interpenetration of global and local social processes* – that is, what would ordinarily be understood as distant cultures and societies

in conventional geographical terms encountering one another at a local level with increasing frequency and intensity. The resulting interpenetration of geographies of the local and the global gives rise to increased cultural diversity.

- 4 *Development of a transnational, global infrastructure* – that is, the formal and informal institutional arrangements that are necessary to the functioning of globalised networks, including transnational or global institutions of economic and political governance. These are expressed as interconnections that transcend nation-state boundaries and function beyond their systems of regulation and control, such as the global financial market with its regulations and rules that other agents have to conform to.

In the context of a globalising world, it has become common currency that the contemporary nation-state is ‘too small to cope with the big issues, and too big to cope with the small ones’ (Davies, 1997: 1120). That is not to say that the nation-state is no longer a key player in the world of geopolitics but rather that its authority as a sovereign, autonomous and independent political unit is subject to challenge. It now shares the stage with other players both at local and at global levels. It is necessary to analyse the nature and extent of that challenge to the nation-state. For much of the modern historical period the map of the world has been organised into discrete geographical units that are simultaneously territorial and political communities – nation-states. This geopolitical framework is widely known as the Westphalian system, following the seventeenth-century European treaty through which the system is considered to have been inaugurated. According to McGrew (2000: 132–4), this system is defined by five key features – territoriality, sovereignty, autonomy, primacy and anarchy – as follows:

- The legal and political powers of nation-states are limited to discrete territorial borders.
- Within these specific territorial units, nation-state governments claim absolute and exclusive authority over and allegiance from the peoples resident therein as citizens of the nation-state.
- Nation-states function as independent containers (Taylor, 1995) of political, economic and social activity. Within the borders that separate the domestic sphere of the nation-state from the rest of the world outside, the nation-state has the right to self-governance free from interference.
- As they control access to territory and the economic, human and natural resources therein, nation-states dominate global politics; there is no higher authority or greater power than the nation-state.
- In a world of nation-states, it is the function of the nation-state to ensure the security and well-being of its citizens. In the Westphalian

system, the norms, principles and practices of nation-states underscore the separation of domestic and international affairs, with the former defined by the existence of government as the central institution of political control. In contrast, international affairs are defined by the relative absence of governance.

It is not possible in this study to offer a comprehensive critique of this particular view of the nature and function of the nation-state. Other commentators lay emphasis on certain key features over others. For example, J. Anderson (1995: 69–71) identifies territory, sovereignty and nationalism, largely following Benedict Anderson (1991) for whom the nation is construed as ‘an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign’. The above outline will suffice in order to make a few points in order to relate broadly the nature of the evidence relating to the impact of globalisation on the nation-state.

Evidence that globalisation is impacting upon the nation-state is considerable and diverse. For example, one might point to the flows of migration across nation-state boundaries and the contemporary continuity of diaspora communities, sustained in part by new information and communication technologies (e.g. Karim, 1998) but also by increasingly affordable and rapid forms of international transport. Similarly, transnational flows of trade and investment or of environmental pollution could equally be presented as evidence of the erosion of the capacity of the nation-state to determine or shape events in a globalising world. Also, the global reach of new technologies, along with their historically unprecedented rate of uptake by comparison with previous communications technologies, and their accessibility to agents other than the nation-state could be cited (e.g. Appadurai, 1995). One could add that increasing accessibility to and identification with global icons – both people and products – undermine the notions of national identity and culture that are central to the nation-state. The emergence of new forms of governance such as the Scottish Parliament of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, the growth of supra-national institutions of governance such as the World Trade Organisation, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the United Nations, as well as the increasing salience of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as Greenpeace, the Red Cross or Oxfam as agents in the global political landscape, appear to serve notice on the hegemony of the nation-state. In short, globalisation marks a shift in the geography of local and global socio-political relations. As a process that is multi-dimensional, the associated geographies are, rather unsurprisingly, both complex and overlapping.

The evidence for the impact of globalisation on the nation-state can be interpreted in a number of ways. The three predominant approaches to globalisation are described as traditionalist, globalist and transformationalist (Held, 2000) and from each of these different insights can be drawn.

Those scholars who hold to the traditionalist position on globalisation caution against what they regard as the excessive claims made by others for globalisation and its impact. According to this critique of globalisation the nation-state remains the key agent in the global political landscape. The hegemony of nation-state is hierarchical, and the USA, as the world's largest economy, the most dominant military power and pre-eminent in the field of space technology, fulfils the role of hegemon. Thompson (2000) deploys evidence relating to international trade, international finance and multinational corporations to argue that the extent of globalisation in the world economy is limited. For example, he notes that patterns with regard to the internationalisation of trade display considerable continuity throughout the course of the twentieth century. For Thompson, therefore, the socio-political system continues to operate in the interest of nation-states and their geo-strategic concerns. He also argues that while nation-states are still powerful they do not fully exercise that power. This, he contends, is because the rhetoric rather than the reality of globalisation has weakened the political will of nation-states to do so. Other global economic patterns cannot, however, be explained away as rhetorical flourishes. The emergence of transnational corporations, while not a quantitative change, represents a significant qualitative shift in the global economy. The dislocation of global corporations from a single nation-state as 'home' is a substantial erosion of the economic sovereignty and autonomy of the nation-state. Similarly, the trilateral economic regionalisation centred on North America, Europe and Japan, and embracing considerable triad interdependency and integration, is not easily accounted for by the traditionalist approach.

For proponents of the globalist perspective on globalisation the nation-state has been superseded. In the contemporary political economy the key agent is global corporate and financial capital. Power, therefore, is not exclusive to the nation-state but is instead exercised by a global cosmocracy, a transnational business community. In this context power is exercised through the networked infrastructure of global markets, driven by new information and communication technologies, and in the interests of global capital. As a result, the capacity of nation-states is severely constrained as they are simultaneously too small to exercise authority over global capital and too big to protect the interests of their citizens from the challenges of a globalising economy. However, others underline the limited penetration of the new technologies that are central to the globalist position. For example, Everard shows that the geography of the Internet is not global, for many parts of the world remain excluded from this networked society as the cost of new technologies render them inaccessible to billions of citizens. Also, Smith points to the failure of the globalisation of culture as an ideological process that engages with a sense of community that is meaningful to individuals (1995: 6, 160) – globalisation does not explain the rise of ethnonationalism in post-Soviet Europe. It is

this very sense of community that serves so powerfully to authenticate and legitimise the nation-state and, for Smith, it is in this absence that the paradox of fragmentation and globalisation that characterises contemporary socio-political shifts arises.

Transformationalists seek to draw from the insights of both the traditionalist and globalist perspectives in delineating a more comprehensive approach to globalisation. McGrew outlines their approach in the following terms:

For transformationalists these three accounts of global governance are considered complementary rather than contradictory; each offers an insight into a particular dimension of global power relations. Indeed they correspond to the three principal structures that intersect to define the form of contemporary global governance and world order:

- Geo-politics and the inter-state system;
- The system of global capitalist production;
- The global social system.

(McGrew, 2000: 160–1)

According to the transformationalist approach the key agents of globalisation are epistemic communities, NGOs and social movements. They exercise power through diverse social forces in a polyarchic manner and in the interests of myriad sectional and collective concerns. Given the nature of epistemic communities, it is not unexpected that for transformationalists power is exercised through the application of knowledge and technical deliberation. The exercise of power is also characterised by the mobilisation of communities across boundaries and is marked by transnational coalition building and multi-layered global governance as responses to the erosion of the authority of the nation-state and the necessity of engaging with the social, economic and environmental issues that transcend Westphalian concepts of sovereignty and autonomy. The transformationalist approach, therefore, seeks to avoid the determinism of both the globalist and traditionalist positions while at the same time drawing from them in constructing a coherent theoretical position that weaves together notions of state power, corporate power and people power. Despite the coherence of the transformationalist position it would appear to be of limited application beyond Europe (Held, 2000: 169–77). The emergence of multilayered governance, central to the transformationalist position, is most apparent in Europe where the development of the European Union has been accompanied by new and diverse forms of regional and local government. In much of the rest of the world evidence for the emergence of alternative polities to the nation-state, whether above, below or alongside it, is less obvious.

The organisation of the world into discrete geopolitical units characterising the Westphalian ideal has been undermined by new conceptions of

political community and space. The emergence of multiple layers of governance, transborder communities of interest and transnational social, economic and environmental problems all challenge the notion of territoriality that is fundamental to the modern nation-state. Rather than rendering the nation-state redundant it is more useful to consider that the role of the nation-state, and the nature of its sovereignty and autonomy, has been changed. One of the impacts of globalisation has been to cause nation-state sovereignty to be redefined. In a world of multilayered governance, nation-state sovereignty is not absolute but negotiable as public power and authority are increasingly shared. The autonomy of the nation-state has been similarly reconfigured; it is no longer exclusive but rather is embedded in multilateral collaboration and co-operation among diverse polities which include the nation-state. In this sense, the nation-state is a more important player as it is required to be more active – a reflexive state – in a globalising world that appears increasingly anarchic, in which a multiplicity of polities, authorities, organisations, movements and ideologies contest and lay claim to the allegiances and identities of its citizens.

Given the limited space of this study, it is useful to refer to one element of globalisation – transnational movements – as the means of exemplifying in more detail other aspects of the impact of globalisation on the nation-state. Transnational movements challenge the nation-state in the context of its alteration by the time–space compression that defines the current form of globalisation (Anderson, 1995: 79–82). Transnational movements are both the product of and catalysts for contemporary globalisation processes. A single such movement may be characterised as a network of interest that transcends the borders of nation-states. Cochrane puts it as follows: ‘Transnational movements consist of social, cultural and political networks which cross the territorial boundaries of existing states, generally with concerns wider than those specified by the boundaries of national politics’ (Cochrane, 1995: 266). It is in this boundary-crossing that transnational movements might most obviously appear to offer a fundamental challenge to the nation-state. The extent of the challenge that transnational movements pose to the nation-state can be traced in a number of areas. But, equally, it can be seen that this challenge does not signal the death of the nation-state but, rather, its transformation.

We may now turn to the key features of the nation-state, as identified by McGrew, in order that this point be further elaborated upon. To begin with, the discrete territoriality of nation-states has been made increasingly porous by the activities of transnational movements. For example, new information and communication technologies (ICTs) penetrate nation-state borders to an extent that no previous similar technology has done (Appadurai, 1995). The virtual simultaneity of the electronic transfer of capital, news, ideas, information, irrespective of the geographies of the nation-state, means that this particular transnational movement has enormous potential to erode the power of the nation-state severely.

According to Karim (1998), the flows of migration across nation-state boundaries and the contemporary continuity of global diaspora communities are sustained, in part, by new ICTs. That said, as Everard (2000) points out, the penetration of the ICT revolution in global terms is rather limited in its extent. Many parts of the world remain excluded from this networked movement as, in large part, the cost of the new technologies is prohibitive for many. Also, as Miller and Slater (2000) show, the Internet can also be reinforcing of the territoriality of the nation-state. It can be made to function as the virtual expression of the discrete entity that is the nation-state. Thus, the geography of the nation-state is reconfigured rather than made redundant.

According to Vertovec (2001) transnational movements challenge the sovereignty of the nation-state by making competing claims on the allegiance of citizens to the extent that citizenship has been transformed, representing a shift towards a new kind of cosmopolitanism. For example, according to Layton-Henry (2002) and Brandt and Layton-Henry (n.d.) contemporary transnational communities have transformed the nature of citizenship whereby nation-states are no longer the sole arbiters of an exclusive form of citizenship. In their examination of three transnational ethnic groups – the Hong Kong Chinese in Toronto and Vancouver in Canada, the African-Caribbean in London and Birmingham in the UK and the Turks in Berlin and Cologne in Germany – they show how multiple identifications pertain to contemporary forms of citizenship. In addition to such transnational ethnic identifications eroding the monopoly of the nation-state to national identity, they also argue that other polities, such as the European Union, now offer coherent and politically meaningful forms of citizenship. They also point out that the highly mobile and flexible international labour migration has caused nation-states to themselves erode distinctions between citizen and alien non-citizen. Other commentators point to the emergence of transnational religious movements as competing foci for the allegiance of people. The increasing globalisation and politicisation of Islam may be, *prima facie*, suggestive of the emergence of an alternative form of citizenship. But, as Beeley (1995) points out, Islam continues to operate largely within the nation-state system, although it has become increasingly influential as a transnational movement connecting people and communities within and between nation-states.

The autonomy of the nation-state, characterised by Taylor (1995) as an independent container, has also been altered by the contemporary proliferation of transnational movements. Economic globalisation has resulted in the greater interdependence of the different parts of the world. Some of the complexity of the nature of this alteration is illustrated by Brook (1995). Brook shows how the transnational operation of global financial markets has undermined the ability of nation-states to control their own economic destiny independently. Brook also describes how the interests of

global capital can outmanoeuvre international organisations, as in the case of the collapse of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism during the early 1990s. The process of economic globalisation has, according to some (Ford and Hudson, 1995), brought about a strategic realignment of economic interests that reorders the way in which nation-states conduct their economic affairs; in this multipolar global economy a variety of agents play key roles. This includes formally organised regional trading blocs, global cities, international institutions such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation, and transnational corporations as well as economic networks informally organised through ethnic linkages (Castles, 1998). However, despite the transnationalism of these new players they are also, at least in part, national in character. The influential G7(8) group, for example, represents the interests of the nation-states with the largest economies (and also Russia) in global context, and transnational corporations are closely identified with, and equally themselves identify with, the country in which their headquarters are located.

Transnational movements have dislocated the nation-state from its hegemony over political power. The primacy of the nation-state is now moderated through a complex layering of access to power. There exists a more diffuse circulation of power among a range of bodies, including the United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), European Union (EU), quasi-political non-governmental organisations and various devolved polities (e.g. McGrew, 2000). For example, the unfolding of political devolution in the UK has given rise to a form of governance in Northern Ireland (NI) which denies the primacy of the nation-state; in this case two nation-states – the UK and the Republic of Ireland. The particular political suture that is the matrix for the sharing of political power in NI gives institutional form to the various transnational interests that are concerned to shape the affairs of this polity. That said, it remains the case that organisations such as the UN, NATO and the EU are largely dominated by the interests of certain powerful nation-states. Hence the UN Declaration on Human Rights is only operable in the UK through its specific incorporation into British legislation; it is not a body of global, absolute and inalienable rights transcending the more immediate and local values associated with nation-states. It is also the case that governance in NI, and other polities with similar such political arrangements, continues to be influenced by the politics of nationalism, as opposed to transnationalism, and the traditional model of the nation-state.

The emergence of organisations of transnational governance such as the UN is significant in another respect. The relative anarchy that McGrew considers to be characteristic of international affairs in the Westphalian nation-state system is, to some extent, ameliorated by the increasing ability of such organisations to intervene in this arena. However, as McGrew (1995: 51) points out, the continued salience of the nation-state, along with the growth of novel forms of global politics and governance,

has resulted in a bifurcation of international political space, and in that sense the contemporary global order is 'incredibly disordered'. While McGrew contends that the trajectory of this disordering is very uncertain and could lead to either a more fragmented or more united world, Camilleri (1990: 64) argues that 'we are witnessing the growth of a more complex and more variegated, yet more unified world order than the system of sovereign states'. The rhetoric of transnational environmental movements is often associated with notions of global unity. But, as Yearley (1995: 238–9) points out, most approaches to global environmental management are severely constrained by conflicting, specific interests rather than being driven by a set of common, global values and principles. It might also be said that events since the writings of these commentators, including '9/11' and its geopolitical impact, suggest that further disordering is the more likely outcome in the medium-term, while also underlining the increasing inability of single nation-states to operate in the arena of global politics without regard to any point of reference other than themselves.

Transnational movements represent a challenge to the role and powers of the nation-state in a range of ways. To the extent that they enable forms of citizenship which are more cosmopolitan, non-exclusive and less-territorially bounded; facilitate modes of employing capital and labour which may bypass the nation-state; exchange information through media for which no political border is impermeable; and function as alternative points of reference for political power and action, transnational movements erode the territoriality, sovereignty, autonomy and primacy of the nation-state as well as contributing to governance in international relations. The challenge is limited, however, as the current processes of globalisation which are the context for the contemporary transnational movements are uneven and unequal in their impacts and effects. Transnational movements are not the harbingers of the death of the nation-state; rather, they signal its substantive transformation.

Ecology

A descriptive analysis of the main models of language in society that inform language policy and planning activities is necessary in order to identify the extent to which they can be applied effectively to the contemporary societies under the current conditions of postmodernity. The ethnolinguistic vitality model of language in society is probably more widely used as a point of reference in the area of language policy and planning than any other model. According to this model the focal point for developing an understanding of language in society is the group defined in terms of ethnicity and language together. The authors of the model (Giles *et al.*, 1977) are of the view that the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group is that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active

collective entity in inter-group situations, and that the potential for the continuity for the given language of the group is dependent upon that. A number of factors are held to determine the vitality of a given language community or ethnolinguistic group. Three broad categories of variables are identified as status, demography and institutional support, and each of these comprises further subdivisions. The three broad categories can be described in the following general terms.

The first broad category, status, comprises what Giles *et al.* describe as the prestige variables. The more prestige an ethnolinguistic group possesses the more vital it is as a collective entity. Status is subdivided into a number of more specific variables: economic status, social status, socio-historical status and language status, both within and without. Economic status is the extent to which a language community has access to and control over the material resources of the given geopolitical unit(s) with which they are associated. That is to say, it refers to the degree of control the group has over its own economic destiny as relates to the economics of the nation-state, region and locality. Social status refers to the value the language community gives to itself; it is the level of contemporaneous self-esteem possessed by the group. Socio-historical status is regarded as a significant variable as ethnolinguistic groups are distinguished by their different histories and their specific sense of their relationship with the past. The historical past as it is seen to relate to the group can be drawn upon in order to effect the socio-political mobilisation of the group for various strategic purposes. It is underscored that it is not the actual historical past which is crucial in this context but rather the meaning that is ascribed to the past by the group and the animators of its mobilisation. It may well be the case that the group regards there to be few such symbolic, historical events with the potential for their mobilisation, or some events may even be considered to have the effect of demobilisation. Language status is the esteem specifically afforded to the given language of the group. This esteem is variously ascribed from both within and without the language group. Ethnolinguistic groups that are minorities within their given state, and whose language is deemed as having less value than that of the ethnolinguistic group that constitutes the societal majority, will, as a result, be less vital as a group. Conversely, a minority group whose language is regarded as being more prestigious than that of a majority group is, by definition, a more vital collective entity.

The second broad category, demography, constitutes two main variables – numbers and distribution. Demographic trends are understood to contribute to the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group as a collective entity in various ways. The two main variables are each subdivided into a range of other factors. Distribution encompasses national territory, concentration and proportion. According to the model, the relationship between an ethnolinguistic group and an identified national territory is a significant factor with regard to the vitality of the group. The possession of the idea

of a national territory or an ancestral homeland, or, even better, the actual possession and residence in such a territory by the ethnolinguistic group, is held to be a crucial element of vitality. Groups divided by borders, or which have been dispossessed of their traditional homeland, are likely, it is argued, to be less successful in maintaining their collective vitality than those groups which have retained possession of their homeland. According to the model, immigrant ethnolinguistic minority groups tend to more ready to assimilate, or to be more susceptible to assimilation, than are indigenous ethnolinguistic minority groups that continue to reside in what they regard as their ancestral homeland. Concentration is regarded as a significant factor in relation to ethnolinguistic vitality. A diffuse geographical distribution is seen to be inimical to group vitality whereas the concentration of numbers is regarded as contributing to the vitality of the group through enabling frequent interaction between group members while, at the same time, engendering feelings of group identity. The matter of proportion is deemed important as the relative proportions of in-group and out-group speakers will effect the dynamics and the nature of inter-group relations.

The other main variable within the broad category of demography is numbers. This variable includes four specific factors – namely, absolute birth-rate, mixed marriage, immigration and migration. Numbers and ethnolinguistic vitality can be seen to relate in a very crude and straightforward manner. Put simply, higher absolute numbers will make an ethnolinguistic group more vital while, on the other hand, it may well be that there exists a minimum threshold of numbers beyond which the prospects for the survival of an ethnolinguistic group are deemed to be very bleak indeed. Birth-rate is an important factor in relative terms. A higher or lower birth-rate in relation to the out-group can be a factor in determining the likely trajectory of ethnolinguistic vitality. Clearly, the higher the relative birth-rate, the greater the levels of vitality of the ethnolinguistic group. Mixed marriage between in-group and out-group members is an important factor in this model as, it is argued, it often results in one of the languages being displaced from the domain of home. Generally, according to the model, the higher-status language will displace the lower-status language as the language of the home. Immigration is a factor which can either enhance or decrease the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group. For example, immigrants may assimilate into the ethnolinguistic group, acquire its language and use it as the means of communication between them. On the other hand, immigrants, when geographically juxtaposed with a subordinate ethnolinguistic group, could opt not to assimilate to that group and instead acquire the cultural attributes of the dominant ethnolinguistic group within that society as a whole. Under such a circumstance the effect upon the vitality of the subordinate ethnolinguistic group is wholly detrimental. The fourth factor with regard to numbers is that of migration. According to the model this is largely economic and means the

departure of the younger and often more able members of the ethnolinguistic group and, almost inevitably, their subsequent assimilation into another ethnolinguistic group, often proximate as well as dominant. This variable might also include forced migration or depopulation and at the worst extreme genocide.

The third broad category pertaining to the model of ethnolinguistic vitality is that of institutional support. This relates to the representation of the ethnolinguistic group and its values or cultural attributes in the various institutions of the nation-state, region and locality associated with the group. Ethnolinguistic vitality relates, in this context, to language use in the various institutional domains related to government, organised religion, business, etc. Institutional support comprises two sets of variables that are characterised as formal and informal. Informal support is defined as the degree to which an ethnolinguistic group has organised itself to promote its self-interest. Such organisational activity could include lobby groups, ginger groups, pressure groups and similar movements in support of the interests of the group. According to the model, the greater the volume, quality and level of organisation the more vital the ethnolinguistic group is. Formal support is regarded as the degree of representation a group enjoys at the decision-making levels in the various domains (social, economic and political) of the state and its various institutional and policy apparatus. Crucial domains for ethnolinguistic vitality include in particular the mass media, education, government departments and services, state-supported arts, the security services and the armed forces. Other important domains are industry, organised religion, and the workplace in both the public and the private sector. The authors offer a few significant caveats to their model. Firstly, the potential impact of macro-level factors, such as processes of modernisation, industrialisation and economic depression, is alluded to by Giles *et al.* (1977: 316–17) but is not regarded as being wholly central to its application. Also, they suggest that an ethnolinguistic group's subjective perception of its own vitality may well be just as important with regard to the continuity of the group and its ethnocultural attributes as would any objective assessment of the actual ethnolinguistic vitality of the group as might be achieved through the scientific application of the model (Giles *et al.*, 1977: 318).

A major critic of the model of ethnolinguistic vitality is Haarmann (1986). His main criticism of the model is that it fails to detail specific language relations. As a result, while the model may be effective for theorising language-related factors at macro-levels, Haarmann argues that it is inadequate for this purpose at micro-levels. Instead, he contends that an adequate theory of language ecology must take into account the full range of possible variables, both general and specific, which either directly or indirectly affect language structure, choice and behaviour (Haarmann, 1986: 9–10). It is his view, therefore, that the range of factors affecting ethnolinguistic vitality, as devised by Giles *et al.*, is a partial inventory. He

argues that only by adopting an ecological approach to language is a holistic view of language–society relations possible. Thus, he states that: ‘Language ecology should cover the whole network of social relations which control the variability of languages and their modal speakers’ behaviour’ (Haarmann, 1986: 3). However, while Haarmann differs from Giles *et al.* on the matter of the impact of external and environmental factors on the language community, he too asserts the centrality of ethnicity to understanding language in society. For example:

Following the basic assumption that the interaction between ethnic groups is the result of environmental factors influencing their members, phenomena have to be analyzed in terms of ecological relations. The ethnic identity of any ethnic group comprises elements which are the reflection of a sum of experiences in the group’s ecological settings.

(Haarmann, 1986: 1)

The centrality to Haarmann’s model of the ethnic group as a key point of reference and the definitive collectivity for understanding language in society as a network of ecological relations system is reinforced elsewhere (Haarmann, 1986: 25–31). To Haarmann it is the ‘central point’ and the ‘focus’ of his model. Unfortunately, however, he does not engage in defining the term ‘ethnicity’ for the benefit of better understanding its operation in the model. Rather, the term ‘ethnic group’ appears to be taken as a discrete and unproblematic concept, as appears to be the case also with Giles *et al.* in relation to their model. None the less, Haarmann continues to offer some important correctives to the ethnolinguistic vitality model and, using the work of Haugen (1972) as an important point of departure, he enunciates a number of valuable points of principle with regard to the further development of ecological perspectives on language.

According to Haarmann, an ecological perspective on language is achieved through the application of the principles of ecology to the study of language (Haarmann, 1986: 3). His model, termed ‘language in ethnicity’ – a view of basic ecological relations – is the result of this and it merits description in some detail so as to understand how the model functions. Haarmann puts forward a basic set of relations as ‘the most comprehensive as a general framework for an ecological system’ (Haarmann, 1986: 4–5); that is: *individual–group–society–state*. According to Haarmann, this framework, which he also describes as a ‘string of concepts’, comprises a hierarchical structure, beginning with the most specific (individual) and culminating in the most general (state). Haarmann’s definitions of society, on the one hand, and state on the other, require closer examination in order that their respective places in this hierarchical string of concepts is clear. Society is defined by Haarmann as the ‘most complex organization of social groups’ (1986: 5). He considers it to be subordinate to the state

due to the 'political implications of state organization' (1986: 5) whereby, he asserts, society cannot exist without the leadership of the state but that the state can exist without the support of society. The conceptual hierarchy is thereby formulated in relation to language as follows:

Language ecology is primarily concerned with language in its fundamental forms of existence which correspond to the different levels in the above string of concepts: language behaviour of the individual speaker, the role of language in group relations, the functional range of language(s) in a given society, and language politics in a given state.
(Haarmann, 1986: 6)

Thus, language for the individual relates to specific language behaviours; for the group it relates to inter-group relations; for society it relates to defined functions; and for the state it relates to politics. On the basis of this framework Haarmann proposes an inventory of variables for the analysis of language from an ecological perspective. He emphasises, however, that the focal point of the inventory is the ethnic group. To attempt to devise a model from the perspective of the individual speaker, Haarmann believes, would be enormously complex and would necessitate the construction of a model that would be bewildering in its complication (Haarmann, 1986: 6).

The inventory of basic ecological variables is extensive and comprises seven categories. These are defined by Haarmann (1986: 7–9) as follows:

- The ethnodemographic range of ecological functions is the general demographic factors that are of importance to the evolution of communities in general.
- The ethnosociological range comprises the social conditions affecting the ethnic group in contact settings.
- The ethnopolitical range of ecological functions comprises those variables that influence relations between the social structure of the ethnic group and the political structures of state.
- The ethnocultural range of ecological functions is based upon the identified cultural traditions and behavioural norms specific to and distinctive of the ethnic group.
- The ethnopsychological range of ecological functions is the set of attitudes relating to group solidarity that function as control mechanisms in relation to both intra-group and inter-group communication.
- The interactional range of ecological functions comprises the variables relating to interaction in the speech community.
- The ethnolinguistic range of ecological functions comprises the variables that are directly related to the language of the ethnic group.

The detailed inventory of the variables that constitute the different categories or ranges devised by Haarmann (1986: 11–16) offers further expla-

nation of the implications of these various categories and their specific variables. It is presented here at some length:

I. Ethnodemographic variables

- The size of an ethnic group (number of members in a community).
- The polarity between focused and dispersed population in ethnic groups (concentration versus dispersion as features of a settlement).
- The polarity between ethnic homogeneity and heterogeneity in the area of an ethnic group's settlement (monoethnic versus polyethnic area of settlement).
- The polarity between urban and rural settlements within an ethnic group.
- The polarity between static settlement and migration movement in an ethnic group.

II. Ethnosociological variables

- The polarity between stability and dynamic change in the ethnic profile of areas of settlement.
- The distribution of the population in an ethnic group by sex.
- Age-group distinctions as an ecological variable influencing language choice and speech behaviour.
- The specifics of social stratification in an ethnic group.
- The specifics of family relations in the social structures of an ethnic group.

III. Ethnopolitical variables

- The ethnos–state relation.
- The speaker–language–state relation (group- and non-group related bilingualism).
- The institutional status of a community's language (cf., categorisations like the language of the state, official language, language for administrative usage, etc.).
- The reproduction potential of a community's language (referring to its special status as a medium for instruction or as a subject at school).
- The characteristics of the division of labour (hierarchical versus segmented division of labour in the relations of an ethnic group with other ethnic communities in a state).

IV. Ethnocultural variables

- Ancestry (descent) as a criterion of group solidarity.
- The polarity between ethnocultural patterns and social distance in interethnic relations.

- The relevance of cultural and/or political organisations for the promotion of a community's interests.
- The relevance of the language's *ausbau* status.
- The specifics of the language's socio-cultural potential.

V. Ethnopsychological variables

- The relevance of enculturation for ethnic identification.
- The relevance of self-categorisation (self-identification) among the members of a community.
- The relevance of and ways of categorising other ethnic groups among the members of a community.
- Language maintenance as a measure of ethnic identity.
- The attitude of the members in a community towards interaction with members of contacting ethnic groups (inclination towards interethnic communication versus rejection of contact).

VI. Interactional variables

- The relevance of communicational mobility in a language community (low-level mobility of monolingual speakers versus high-level mobility of multilingual speakers in a community).
- Interactional determination in the use of communicational means (cf., language varieties in diglossic and polyglossic settings).
- The relevance of intraethnic and interethnic role relations for interaction.
- The degree of routine interaction with members of other ethnic groups (degree of familiarity with interethnic communication among members of a community).
- The degree of publicity (publicness) of speech settings.
- The relevance of topic for intraethnic and intergroup interaction (with topics ranging from general political to special private subjects).

VII. Ethnolinguistic variables

- The relevance of linguistic distance between contact languages (problem of contacting languages with different degrees of linguistic distance/*abstand*).
- The relevance of ethnically specific pragmatic strategies of verbal interaction.
- The role of grammatical determinism within the framework of deictic categories (specifics in the system of deictic categories and their usage in contacting languages).
- The characteristics of language contacts with respect to the socio-cultural status of the contacting languages (socio-cultural categorisation of language contacts).

The various ecological functions are understood by Haarmann to be interdependent and in this regard the ethnopsychological variables play a crucial role in intergroup relations in the operation of the model. These variables act as a set of filters that shape the nature of interaction between groups. Also, these filters relate to the ways in which the group views not only its own ethnicity but, in addition, the ethnic identity of contact groups. Haarmann (1986: 26) considers that it is only possible to perceive these factors and their influence indirectly. According to Haarmann (1986: 28) the interactional variables also possess filter-type properties, but in this case they relate in a more general fashion to a number of the categories of ecological functions other than the interactional range. They are the ethnodemographic, ethnosociological, ethnocultural and ethnolinguistic categories (enumerated above as I, II, IV and VII). While one notes that Haarmann asserts that 'there is a close interdependence between all ecological ranges and that no range dominates the others' (1986: 9), it appears that the ethnopolitical range does possess a certain overarching quality. The necessary qualification is made by Haarmann by way of explanation of the role of ethnopolitical factors in the model:

The functional range of ethnopolitical factors is best understood as an embracing category comprising all other functional ranges. This indication of an outer framework of ecological relations implies that political factors influencing the behaviour of ethnic groups form a general background for all other societal and intergroup relations ... As all social conditions of ethnic groups are bound to the political organization of the society in a given state, the components of the political systems must be indicated separately. It is assumed that the effect of ethnodemographic, ethnocultural or other factors on the behaviour of reference and contact groups can only be represented in an overall ecological system when these have been integrated into the general framework of a society's political foundation (or organization).

(Haarmann, 1986: 28)

According to Haarmann (1986: 29) this, therefore, is the model which uniquely integrates the shaping of communicational systems and the verbal interaction of groups, incorporates micro- and macro-level factors, and accounts for language-specific relations, thereby allowing for the comprehensive viewing of language in social context.

However, both models have in common some important weaknesses. For example, while ethnicity is a significant point of reference for Haarmann, as it is with Giles *et al.*, the term is not subjected to critical examination. Indeed, implicit to the models is an essentialist and deterministic position on the cultural attributes of ethnicity and on the collective organisational form of ethnic identity. Considering the position adopted in this study on the matter of ethnicity and the functioning of language in society,

this must be regarded as a limitation of substance. The models also presume the exclusive hegemony of the nation-state in the political landscape. Again, given the perspective on the nation-state as a form of polity which is under siege as is delineated in this study, this too is a point of weakness for the models. Also, in terms of policy applications it places emphasis on top-down, macro-level approaches to language-planning activity. The model proposed by Haarmann is rather innocent of questions of power and contestation, as is characteristic of much of the work on the ecology of language as reflected, for example, by Mühlhäusler: 'Functioning ecologies are characterised by predominantly mutually beneficial links and only to a small degree by competitive relationships' (Mühlhäusler, 2001: 1). Therefore, it is necessary to give consideration to a number of methodological and theoretical points at this juncture. The dynamics of the relations between language, power and contestation in an ecological context must be located. The collapse of conceptual form and clarity that constitutes the notion of the ethnolinguistic group and its unproblematised centrality to language–society models must be addressed. While building upon these models, a resolution of these tensions is sought here through the further examination of language in an ecological context and within a wider sociological framework.

Critical ecolinguistics

The devising of an alternative approach to the ecology of language which embraces questions of power and contestation, and accounts for the impact of processes such as globalisation, requires that the notion of the ecology be revisited so as to achieve a realistic understanding of the term, as opposed to simply conceiving of the ecology as an ideal or as a mere metaphor. This realist approach to an ecological perspective on language may be termed 'critical ecolinguistics'. In order to achieve this it is necessary to refer to how the ecology is conceived as the discrete subject of specialist scholarly and professional activity. Most of those who are engaged in the study of the ecology, termed 'ecologists', would agree with Odum in defining ecology as '[t]he totality or pattern of relations between organisms and environment' (Odum, 1975: 1, 4). In their study of organisms in the environment, ecologists identify two distinct components to the environment. The physical component is one. This comprises the climate, water, temperature, radiation and nutrients. The other is the biotic component, comprising the organisms that coexist in the environment. Understanding the complexity of relations between organisms and their environment is a central concern for ecologists. This is undertaken at a number of levels – namely, individual, population, community, ecosystem and biosphere. Other than the term 'individual', which is self-explanatory, these terms merit definition. A 'population' is understood as a group of organisms of the same species in a given area. A 'community' is the sum,

or assemblage, of species populations found in a given area. An 'ecosystem' is the complexity of relationships between a biotic (organic or living) community and the physical environment. Odum and McIntosh respectively define 'ecosystem' in the following terms:

The community and the nonliving environment function together as an ecological system or ecosystem.

(Odum, 1975: 4)

Ecosystem [is] . . . conceived to encompass the whole complex of biotic community and physical environment, and studies of this complex are commonly designated ecosystem ecology.

(McIntosh, 1985: 196)

The biosphere is understood to constitute the global sum of ecosystems.

Central to ecological thought is the notion of finitude. As Odum puts it, 'the living space functions of one's environment are interrelated, mutually restrictive, and not unlimited in capacity' (1975: 204). Given the restrictive nature of the environment, its limited capacity, and the interrelations between and across the biotic community and the physical environment, the various organisms impact upon each other at the level of individual, community and population. This can cause adaptation on the part of organisms or competition between or amongst them over the resources necessary to their continuity. The resultant competition can take various forms, including unreconstructed violence. Owen, for example, puts it in the following terms:

In view of the fact that the carrying capacity of an environment is limited it seems likely that there is competition among individuals for resources. Competition in this sense need not necessarily imply open conflict between individuals.

(Owen, 1980: 63)

The understanding that competition is central to the functioning of ecology is not a new insight. McIntosh credits Warming with first identifying the centrality of the issues and in anticipating the enthusiasm of later ecologists with regard to the ecological study of competition:

Warming (1895) reported the restriction of plant species from certain habitats by competition, forcing the species to grow in another habitat, which gave it the appearance of preferring that soil. He anticipated the interest in competition of later generations of ecologists: 'There is scarcely any biological task more attractive than of determining the nature of the weapons by which plants oust each other from habitats'.

(McIntosh, 1985: 179)

Ecologists understand competition to relate to access to, and the use of, the resources of the environment that are variously necessary to the survival of the different organisms that comprise the biotic community. Competition can take place between different species as well as among different individual members of the same single species. The specific nature of the competition is determined by what ecologists understand as 'the niche'. A niche is the place that is occupied by a given species in the environment. This comprises both the conditions within which the species exists and also the resources that it utilises. The maximum potential niche that could, in theory, be occupied by a given species in the absence of competition is described by ecologists as the 'fundamental niche'. In reality, species occupy reduced niches due to competition. The actual niche thus occupied is termed the 'realised niche'. In this way, competition in ecological context may be viewed as a mechanism for gaining access to resources and of denying that access to others. The securing of a niche and its effective, exclusive protection from potential competitors is vital. MacKenzie *et al.* define competition as:

an interaction among individuals utilizing a limited resource, resulting in reduced fitness in the competing individuals. Competition occurs both between species utilizing a shared resource (interspecific competition) and among members of a species (intraspecific competition). The niche of an individual or species ... is critical in determining the degree of competition with other species or individuals. Large niche overlap generally results in intense competition.

(MacKenzie *et al.*, 1998: 92)

Competition is widely understood by ecologists as an important 'clue to community organisation' (McIntosh, 1985: 93). Competition relates to community organisation in that under circumstances in which competition is intense one of the competitors might suffer ejection from the niche or be destroyed. Alternatively, the competitors could achieve means of sharing the niche through adaptation. Odum puts it as follows:

Where there are two or more closely related species adapted to the same or a similar niche, interspecific competition becomes important. If the competition is severe, one of the species may be eliminated completely, or forced into another niche or another geographical location; or the species involved may be able to live together at reduced density by sharing resources in some sort of equilibrium.

(Odum, 1975: 130)

Thus, competition in an ecological context is considered to be a mechanism for bringing about the displacement or exclusion of rivals from the environment. This behaviour is often termed 'competitive exclusion' by ecologists and, as asserted by McIntosh, the 'idea of competitive exclusion

... [is] a cornerstone of population and community ecology' (1985: 183–4). Adaptation is an alternative to exclusion and can take different forms. It can give rise to behavioural and physiological changes in a species. This is described as 'character displacement' by ecologists. Species can seek to avoid having to compete with each other through undertaking contrasting adaptations to the environment, especially with regard to the manner in which they utilise resources. As Owen puts it:

Competition for resources between individuals of a species is an essential part of the selective process that leads to adaptation: competition between species leads to a selection for differences in the way resources are exploited.

(Owen, 1980: 179)

The implication of this 'selection for differences' is that competition causes difference. Thus it is a central tenet of ecology 'that no two species found together are ecologically identical and that the differences between them result from and are maintained by competition' (Owen, 1980: 98).

Competition in ecological context works in two main ways. These are termed exploitation or resource competition and interference competition. Exploitation competition is understood to operate under circumstances in which organisms together deplete a finite resource thereby competing with each other indirectly. The result of such resource depletion is the reduced fitness of the organisms, understood as the ability of the organisms to secure their reproduction. Interference competition is when individuals compete directly, largely through violent confrontation. Under this circumstance reduced fitness results from injury and death, in addition to that which results from the depletion of resources. It is also the case that the specific impact of competition, of both types, upon the various competitors differs. The cost of competition is not borne equally. Responses to competition include 'territoriality' – that is, the active interference of individuals or groups to maintain territory boundaries and thereby secure exclusive space for the species to the extent that is possible. Another response is known as 'dispersal'. This entails the actual movement of organisms away from locations of high population density. This is a common strategy for younger members of a given species in particular. A third response to competition is known as 'resource partitioning'. This is the only option that does not directly result in either the physical displacement or the expiration of organisms. This response allows for the coexistence of species:

The competitive exclusion principle states that coexistence can only occur in a stable, homogeneous environment if the species niches are differentiated, because if two species had identical requirements one would dominate and outcompete the other.

(MacKenzie *et al.*, 1998: 103)

In practice, ecologists are of the view that, under most circumstances, coexistence is likely to include an element of competition. Non-competitive coexistence is only likely to occur under special conditions. According to ecologists, the extent of niche differentiation is the most important factor in enabling non-competitive coexistence (MacKenzie *et al.*, 1998: 103). This relates to two variables – namely, the range and the volume of resources utilised by a species. In theory, this condition relates to attaining a balance within the narrowness of range – thereby reducing the likelihood of interspecies competition and the flatness of volume, and thus reducing the likelihood of intraspecies competition. In reality, few such ecological scenarios have been reliably identified. In those cases where competition is not apparent ecologists assert that the observed patterns derive from historical competition rather than niche differentiation. For example:

Evolution may act to reduce the degree of competition of species – thus current patterns of resource utilization are a result of competition over time, even though little or no competitive interactions are currently observed. This phenomenon is known as ‘the ghost of competition’.

(MacKenzie *et al.*, 1998: 103)

In general terms, ecosystems are not stable or homogeneous entities but are dynamic and diverse. The main implication of the spatial and temporal heterogeneity of the ecology is that the properties of the physical environment and the various resources necessary to the continuity of given organisms are subjected to change. Change has many intended, and unintended, consequences and will variously impact upon the totality of the ecology. The effect of this ecological heterogeneity is continually to modify the relations between the principal components of the ecology, the biotic community and the physical environment and their specific constituent parts. Therefore, there is no permanently fixed and unchallengably durable disposition in any ecosystem that works inevitably in the favour of certain given species over others. In this way, heterogeneity and diversity are inherent to understanding the ecological context.

This brief reflection upon the nature of ecology can be grounded in sociological terms. This shift from biology to sociology can be engineered via the field of study known as human ecology. Several commentators indicate a number of points of engagement (Steiner and Nauser, 1993). They consider that Giddens’s reworking of the conceptions of social reproduction and of social transformation in structuration theory is a significant means of making the joins. The introduction of the concept of the duality of structure by Giddens is intended as a means of transcending the subject–object dichotomy that confounds the social sciences. By this, action and structure are regarded as a dialectical process in which the rules

and resources of society are recursively involved in social reproduction (Giddens, 1986: 25). In this context, structure refers to the systemic ordering of societal rules and resources. Some points of engagement between ecology and structuration are identified by Werlen (1993) as follows:

- Systems of semantic rules – structures of *Weltanschauungen*.
- Systems of resources – structures of domination.
- Systems of moral rules – structures of legitimation.

These structures, Giddens argues, only become real or meaningful through action. Structuration comprises ‘the dynamic process whereby structures come into being’ (Giddens, 1976: 121). The idea of structuration, therefore, implies the structuring of social relations as a result of the duality of structure and, in this sense, structure is both constraining and enabling (Giddens, 1986: 376). As it is only through action that the social world is constituted it follows that the concept of interaction is critical in understanding social reproduction and transformation. It is in this context that contestation arises. This will be in either of two forms, according to Giddens – ‘conflict’ and ‘contradiction’. The former may be described as a type of competition in which the interacting agents operate according to the same structuring principles. This type is most likely to arise in relation to contestation over resources. The latter form of contestation, contradiction, may be regarded as the more profound form as it relates to actual structural oppositions in which the complete system of order is under challenge.

In addition to notions of systemic ordering a number of other points of engagement are noted by Lawrence (1993: 217–24). Lawrence does this through the ecological analysis of four key concerns in structuration theory – locale, purposive behaviour, power and resources. The term ‘locale’ is understood by Giddens to embrace both the physical and the imaginative environment. That is to say, it encompasses both geographical location and contextual meaning. Place-names may be regarded as a feature of this sense of place. According to structuration theory, this spatial contextuality, understood as locale, is constitutive of action. In this sense the environment – or, as Lawrence would have it, the ecology – is manipulated by agents so as to enable or to constrain social reproduction and transformation:

The communication of meaning, as with all aspects of the contextuality of action, does not have to be seen merely as happening ‘in’ time–space. Agents routinely incorporate temporal and spatial features of encounters in processes of meaning constitution.

(Giddens, 1986: 29)

Lawrence considers that Giddens’s preoccupation with the related concepts of ‘reiteration’ and ‘routinisation’ limits the explanatory capacity of

structuration theory with regard to change. According to Lawrence (1993: 219–20), Giddens adopts a conservative view of society through viewing institutionalised societal practices in terms of the reiterative and routine quality of group and individual interaction with institutions. This he terms ‘purposive’ behaviour. For Lawrence, however, the possibilities for change are inherent to the notion of purposive behaviour. For example, purposive behaviour has outcomes that are not predicted by the agents of reiterative and routine interaction with institutions. Such outcomes are described by Giddens as the ‘unintended consequences of intentional conduct’ (Giddens, 1986: 12). In this way, both routine and change are properties of purposive behaviour.

A similar duality is discerned in relation to power. According to Giddens, power can be both enabling and constraining:

[P]ower is the capacity to achieve outcomes; whether or not these are connected to purely sectional interests is not germane to its definition. Power is not, as such, an obstacle to freedom or emancipation but is their very medium – although it would be foolish, of course, to ignore its constraining properties . . . Power is generated in and through the reproduction of structures of domination.

(Giddens, 1986: 157–8)

Contestation, in the context of power, is management and is resolved through an understood set of regulatory mechanisms based upon ‘tacit knowledge’ – that is, a set of rules that, in practice, are explicit, absolute, fixed and prescribed. Their most common form is that of the written constitution. These regulatory mechanisms are, in themselves, a significant resource. Under the circumstances of contestation they may become the focal point of competition and the key point of access to domination:

Explicit regulators usurp many implicit customs, norms and rules; they may challenge ‘the knowledgeability’ of some people, and they become a resource of abstract power and social control in human groups and societies. One consequence is that face-to-face conduct is gradually replaced by technical forms of communication and administrative controls which increasingly regulate daily affairs.

(Lawrence, 1993: 222)

The notion of resources, as Lawrence notes (1993: 223–4), is an obvious point of engagement between human ecology and structuration theory. It is a function of the ecology that issues of power and competition bear a strong relationship to the gaining of accessibility to and the exercise of control over resources. Two types of resource are identified by Giddens.

They are allocative and authoritative resources and are defined in the following terms:

Allocative resources refer to capabilities – or, more accurately, to forms of transformative capacity – generating command over objects, goods or material phenomena. Authoritative resources refer to types of transformative capacity generating command over persons or actions.

(Giddens, 1984: 33)

Hence, while the specific nature of the resources may vary between the natural and the social ecology their function remains consistent. Resources are integral to the competitive fitness of agents.

Conclusions

A comprehensive view of language in society is possible through what may be termed critical ecolinguistics. This is a position that is characterised by a number of key features. These are as follows:

- Language carves reality into conceptual space. That is, it is neither simply a reflection of social reality nor is it the overwhelming determinant of world-view. In this way, language and society are locked into a dialectic relationship whereby language may be understood to signify reality.
- Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, market and doxa are useful conceptual devices for understanding the organisation of society and the shaping of the individual as a member of society. In this context language is understood as a form of capital, the value of which relates to particular behaviours and practices to which the individual is predisposed by the conditions of society.
- The ethnic group is understood as a collectivity of mutual self-interest that is derived from an observably real past. In this way ethnicity is not simply the stuff of primordial cultural forms nor is it a wholly artificial social construct. Instead, ethnicity is defined both by its historical continuity and its capacity for transformation. It is in this context that language relates to the ethnic group.
- Language and power are interwoven via the polity. The nation-state is understood to be an important point of reference. However, the key properties pertaining to the hegemony of the nation-state, its territoriality, sovereignty, autonomy and primacy are under challenge from the various forces of globalisation. The substantive transformation of the nation-state implies changes for language in relation to novel forms and modalities of citizenship, capital, labour, information exchange and governance. The impact of this will be uneven and unequal.

- An ecological perspective on language aims at accounting for the totality or pattern of relations between language and agency in the social world; it is more substantial than an idealist or biological metaphor. The contribution of a critical ecolinguistics to this perspective on language is to show how questions of competition and contestation operate in relation to language in an ecological context.

Part I

Histories

3 The early historical to the late medieval period

Introduction

The early history of the Irish language in Ireland is a period of both remarkable continuity and change. The various shifts that characterise the social evolution of the Irish language in this period are broadly outlined, beginning with the advent of Christianity accompanied by Latin, its elevating and universalising script, and including the incursions of Old Norse-speaking Vikings, through to the intervention of the multilingual Anglo-Normans. In doing so, a radical position on the continuity of the Irish language is adopted, conceiving it in terms of a fusion of elements – Latin, Scandinavian, Anglo-Norman and Gaelic. Also, the putative revival of the Irish language in the late medieval period is analysed. The nature of the status and state of the Irish language in this particular period is shown to be driven by the loss of the domain of organised religion for the language. Associated to that was the emergence of a high-status, secular, learned class, the language of which was Irish. This class exercised considerable influence in Irish society as those in it played key roles with regard to legitimising secular authority across all parts of Ireland, and in Irish-speaking societies beyond the island, through their mastery over traditional modes of expert knowledge – law, histories, genealogies and poetry. It was through this powerful section of Irish society that a highly standardised form of the Irish language emerged, known as early modern or classical Irish. However, in parallel to this the Irish language was ceding functions in the domain of law as English common law spread to many parts of Ireland. Also, the Irish language was not a substantial feature of the incipient urban sites of this period. Thus, the place of the Irish language in late medieval society in Ireland is better understood in terms of the secularisation of the Irish learned tradition rather than as a matter of resurgence, and it is far from a position of being a monolithic presence in all areas of Irish society.

Beginnings

The Irish language belongs to the Celtic family of languages within the Indo-European group of languages. The Celtic languages are now restricted to the Atlantic periphery of Europe. However, during the first millennium BC Celtic languages were widely spoken in western and parts of eastern Europe, as well as in Britain and Ireland. It is upon the basis of this geography that the Celtic languages are divided into two major groups – continental and insular. The continental Celtic languages are first recorded in the first century BC. The sources of evidence include coin inscriptions, place-names, personal names and inscriptions in Greek, Latin and Iberian texts. The Roman Empire and the great migrations of various Germanic tribes which marked the end of the Roman Empire in western Europe together brought about the extinction of the continental Celtic languages. Breton was transplanted from Britain to continental Europe during the early medieval period. The insular Celtic languages first enter the historical record with the expansion of the Roman Empire to include Britain during the first century AD. The body of documented evidence for the insular Celtic languages is much greater than that for the continental Celtic languages (Richter, 1988). Mallory (1989: 96) notes that the earliest most substantial body of evidence regarding the insular Celtic languages is the gazetteer of Ptolemy dating to around the second century AD. This provides a number of place-names and personal names relating to Ireland. The insular Celtic languages are subdivided into Q Celtic and P Celtic. This is on the basis of the transmutation of the Proto-Indo-European sound ‘k’ as ‘c’ in the Irish language, Scots-Gaelic and Manx – described as the Goedelic group of insular Celtic languages, and as ‘p’ in the Welsh, Cornish and Breton languages – variously the Brittonic, Brythonic or British section of insular Celtic languages. The status of Pictish in this framework is rather unclear for, while it is now considered to be an Indo-European language and very likely a member of the Celtic family of languages, it is not certain to which of the insular subdivisions it ought to be ascribed. Pictish also appears to have retained a significant non-Indo-European element. That said, the Q–P division remains evident in some differences that exist between Modern Irish and Modern Welsh, as exemplified by the word ‘head’ which is ‘*ceann*’ in Irish and ‘*pen*’ in Welsh. The historical development of the Irish language begins with Proto or Archaic Old Irish in the fourth century AD. At around AD 650 this is replaced by Old Irish. Middle Irish flourished in the period between 900 and 1200. Classical Irish or Early Modern Irish is ascribed to the period 1200 to 1600. Finally, Modern Irish emerged from around 1600.

The Celtic languages were probably introduced to the islands of Britain and Ireland sometime during the first millennium BC as, according to Mallory, ‘The similarity between the earliest evidence for Brittonic and

Ogham Irish are too close to permit a long separation in time, and they share the same Late Bronze and Iron Age vocabularies of their continental relations' (1989: 106).

From around AD 300 the Irish landscape was dramatically altered with the transformation of the environment by the spreading of the practice of agriculture and the destruction of primeval afforestation. The particular social, cultural and economic context in which the Irish language first enters the historical record in Ireland is put by Smyth in the following terms:

[I]t is clear from the scientific and literary evidence that the great assault on the woodlands and the first great historic 'Age of Clearing' in Ireland began c.300–400 AD and continued for at least another 400 years. Underpinning these transformations were three major cultural forces: the introduction of iron as the new technology of warfare, ploughing and farming, the crystallization of a Celtic conquest and culture, expressed in distinctive linguistic, legal and settlement terms and the introduction of an innovative, universalizing script religion – Christianity.

(W.J. Smyth, 1993: 404)

The earliest evidence in Ireland for Archaic Old Irish is from the fourth century. During the early historical period Celtic-speakers in Ireland had developed their own script, termed 'ogam' (also 'ogham'), and it is characteristically found on stone grave memorials. Literary sources indicate that the script was also used on wood. Such ogam stones, or *galláin*, are found not only in Ireland but also in various parts of western Britain. Of the 300 or so ogam stones found in Ireland they are mostly located in Munster and are of the fourth- to seventh-century period. It is suggested (Connolly, 1998) that ogam was probably the language of an elite priestly order and that its use was associated with rituals and formal oral renditions. Ogam may well have been most closely associated with a particular early people in Ireland, namely the Érainn (Greek: Iernoi; Latin: Hibernica). They are often considered to be the Iverni tribe identified in Munster by Ptolemy (Claudius Ptolemaius), the geographer of the second century AD based in Alexandria. The term is also used in some sources to describe the whole of the inhabitants of the island. It is also related to the term 'Ériu', an early historical goddess who granted sovereignty to whomever she mated with. The term fell into disuse as a term to describe a people sometime around the seventh century, although it was retained to describe the island of Ireland. With the advent of Christianity ogam was displaced by Latin as an elevated language, and Old Irish, perhaps the contemporary popular vernacular of ogam, developed into a written language. The Irish language also became fixed to the landscape in this period as a result of the development of more permanent forms of settlement:

Particularly crucial in the period from c.400 to c.800 AD was the establishment of a permanent sedentary culture as evidenced by the ring-forts, cashels and crannógs and the literal rebaptizing of the whole landscape with an array of family names and place-names. The early medieval Celtic elites and families, using these place-names and the myths and stories associated with the nature and meaning of places – the Dindsenchas – invested these now permanently settled and bounded places with enduring symbols of their own identities.

(W.J. Smyth, 1993: 405)

It was in this period also that Archaic Old Irish and Old Irish was carried to Scotland (where it subsequently became Scottish Gaelic or *Gàidhlig*), the Isle of Man, as well as to Wales where it survives in place-names throughout the western and southern parts of that country. Other important sources of evidence include *Amra Coluim Chille*, dated to around AD 600, and, from the seventh century, the law texts and the personal names in Adomnán's Life of St Columba, Muirchú's Life of St Patrick and Tírechán's Life of St Patrick. From the outset of the early historical period in Ireland, from the fifth century AD, there is very little evidence to suggest that any language other than Archaic Old Irish was in significant use at this time, although, it is the case that Palladius was sent by the Catholic Church in Rome to Ireland in AD 431 to already established Christian communities on the island, probably in the southern half; 'Ad Scottos in Christum credentes ordinatus a papa Caelestino Palladius primus episcopus mittitur [Consecrated by Pope Celestine, Palladius is sent as the first bishop to the Irish who believe in Christ]' (trans. Richter, 1988: 43). Also, recent archaeological evidence indicates that the Roman presence in Ireland, and therefore perhaps of Latin, was more substantial than previously thought (Warner, 1991). For example, metalwork of Romano-British origin dating to the first and second centuries AD has been recovered in various parts of south-east Ireland, including gold coins adjacent to Dublin, brooches at Knockaulin and at Cashel in Co. Tipperary, items from a military uniform at Rathgall in Co. Wicklow, inhumation graves with coins at Bray, a cremation urn at Stonyford in Co. Kilkenny and a military item recovered at the site of Golden in Co. Tipperary. The unearthing of various Roman items in gold, silver and bronze, along with a pre-Roman gold torc with Latin inscription at the passage grave of Newgrange in the Boyne valley to the north of Dublin, further attest to a Roman or Romanised presence in Ireland. During the third and fourth centuries AD the Roman influence was greater as many of the Romanised Irish returned to Ireland bringing with them innovations in language, dress, weaponry, burial and religion. Thus, Warner concludes as follows:

Although Ireland was not formally part of the Roman Empire it was greatly influenced by that powerful neighbour. The Irish Early Iron

Age La Tène-based culture continued alongside, rather than completely fusing with, the Roman. Until, that is, the Goidelic intruders, with Roman arms, ornaments and manners returned with their own external fusion of those cultures. A fusion that had happened while the Irish were settlers within the Empire.

(Warner, 1991: 116)

The affinity between Archaic Old Irish and Latin is indicated in the ogam script. The vertical and oblique notches and strokes indicate vowels and consonants using the letters of the Latin alphabet. Outside of Ireland ogam stones commonly carry both Archaic Old Irish and Latin inscriptions. Ogam was never used for anything more than the most basic tasks of recording, largely that of personal names and in genitive form. The predominant cultural form was oral. The fuller literary expression of Irish only became possible through the greater impact again of Latin and its written culture upon society in Ireland. It is as a result of this transformation that Old Irish emerges.

The development of writing under the influence of sub- and post-Roman Christianising missions explains why the documented evidence for Old Irish is much more substantial than that for Archaic Old Irish. This evidence includes, for example, the texts relating to the *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, glosses to the New Testament texts, the Camrai homily and material relating to the Book of Armagh, all of which date to the eighth or early ninth century. This language is remarkable in its standardisation. It is in this period that appellations for the language and its speakers, which were known and used by the speakers of Old Irish themselves, are recorded. *Goídelc* is the Old Irish word for the Celtic language that was spoken in Ireland in the early historical period. From this derives the term '*Goídel*', meaning 'one who speaks *Goídelc*'. It is likely that both terms were, in turn, derived from the Celtic language as spoken on the island of Britain. The cognate forms for *Goídelc* and *Goídel* in Modern Welsh, understood to be the contemporary derivative of that ancient form of British Celtic, are *Gwyddeleg* and *Gwyddel* (pl. *Gwyddelod*). The term carries a pejorative meaning, as the Welsh word 'gwydd', from which it is derived, means 'wild, vile, or savage'. Irish historical tradition derives the term from the pseudo-historical personality of Gaedheal Glas who is identified as a grandson of Noah. According to the myth the Irish language was fashioned by Gaedheal Glas from the best elements of the 72 languages that were spoken at the time of the Tower of Babel. The earliest recorded use of the term '*Goídel*' by the Irish to describe themselves dates to the seventh century and the early eighth century in Annal sources. According to Koch the borrowing of the terms '*Goídelc*' and '*Goídel*' signifies a very profound shift which took place during the seventh century in the relationship between society and language in Ireland:

The most likely explanation is that *Goídil* and *Goídelg* were borrowed as new words in the seventh century to express concepts which must themselves have been in some way new at that time. That is not to say that the language and ethnolinguistic group speaking the language had no prior existence; rather, the new currency of *Goídil* and *Goídelg* reflect[s] some sort of changed circumstances and hence changed awareness of language and group identity. And these changes are not hard to find in the seventh century, at which time the Irish first emerge as a fully Christian group, literate in Latin and their vernacular, and fully intellectually engaged with developments in both Britain and mainland Europe. Obviously, the two conditions, cultivating a written vernacular and being massively in contact with other linguistic groups, will have combined to make the Irish newly aware of themselves as a group in the domain of language, as well as opening the possibility of expressing this awareness with loan-words, in other words, taking over a ‘them’ identification as an ‘us’ identification.

(Koch, 2002: 54)

The seventh century is identified as the critical period on the basis of linguistic evidence, and a range of historical factors are presented by Koch as the drivers of this far-reaching social change:

Why the seventh century was a promising horizon for such developments is not hard to appreciate given the broad outlines of the historical context. The relationships between the peoples of the British Isles had altered, not just through Anglo-Saxon military and political success, but through their conversion. The second and lasting conversion of the largest and most dominant of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms Northumbria had been affected [*sic*] by the Gaels of the island monastery of Iona in Scottish Dál Riata in 635. Thus, not only were Britons, Gaels, Anglo-Saxons and Picts in contact in Britain as sometimes allies and sometimes adversaries, as they had been for centuries, they were now for the first time four literate Christian peoples on the threshold of vernacular literacy. The educated élite of these four groups were now able to appreciate as Bede was to formulate a century later of Britain as an island inhabited by four peoples speaking four languages; *linguae Brettonum, Pictorum, Scottorum, et Anglorum*.

(Koch, 2002: 55)

The meaning of *Goídel* as an ethnolinguistic designation was certainly consolidated during the ninth century in response to the settlement of the Vikings in Ireland.

A sense of the nature of the interconnections between Ireland and Wales in this early historical period is revealed in the pattern of exchanges

between the Irish language, Latin and British (Welsh) (Richter, 1988: 48). All of the Latin loan-words in Irish were appropriated via Welsh, beginning in the first half of the fourth century with terms that were not ecclesiastical – for example [Latin–Welsh–Irish]: *planta*–*plant*–*cland* (child/children); *purpura*, *porffor*, *corcur* (purple). In the immediate sub- and post-Roman period the borrowing from Welsh continued but, by now, the words were largely ecclesiastical and characterised by a shift in accent from the last but one syllable in Welsh to the first syllable in Irish, rather than the Q–P dichotomy – for example: *peccatum*–*pechod*–*peccath* (sin/sins); *offrenda*–*offeryn*–*oifrend* (the service of mass). Upon the establishment of Christianity in Ireland the direction of the exchange reversed. Terms were borrowed from the Irish language into Welsh with the characteristically Irish stress on the first syllable – for example [Latin–Irish–Welsh]: *capitulavium*–*caplait*–*cablyd* (Maundy Thursday). The impact of Latin Christian culture was, to begin with, greatest in those parts of Ireland that had the most direct and frequent contacts with Wales – namely, the historical provinces of Leinster and Munster which comprise the southern half of the island. It was, in all likelihood, to Leinster that Palladius was sent directly from Rome to the Christian community in Ireland. The pathway followed by Patrick to Ireland was geographically and culturally very different. Latin was to Patrick, in his own words, a foreign language. The Latin he uses in his writings, *Confessio* and *Epistola*, is considerably shaped by the syntaxes of the insular Celtic languages, one of which was probably his first language. His mission was among the Irish who were not yet Christian in the northern half of the island. Thus, there were significant geographical differences in the patterns of cultural exchange and language shift in Ireland in this period. Most crucially with regard to language shift, as Ireland had never been incorporated into the Roman Empire, unlike continental western and central Europe, the Latin tongue was never adopted as the vernacular. Latin was introduced to Ireland as a language of sacral quality and remained a language of a privileged few. However, it shared certain high-status language domains with Old Irish for, in general terms, within a few generations of the initial Christianising mission ecclesiastical sites across Ireland became authoritative centres of knowledge and learning, and Latin and Irish were their languages. These centres were at the same time alternative and complementary to the non-Christian learned traditions in the areas of poetry, genealogy, language, music, medicine and the law, which survived, in various forms, up until the advent of modernity. However, while Latin was certainly a language of high-status in early Irish society it did not penetrate all of the high status language domains associated with the learned class. This section of Irish society comprised the *filid* (poets or seers), the *brithemín* (‘brehon’ – legal experts), the *senchaid* (experts in genealogy) and the *druí* (sing. *druí* – druids). Latin culture was most significant in its impact upon the domain associated with the *druí* and their particular

functions in society. Note that Patrick's principal contestations were with the *druíd*, most notably his contests with the *druíd* of Lóegaire mac Néill (d. 462), one of the most important of the kings of the early historical period. It was at the expense of the influence and interests of this section of the Irish learned class in particular that the Christian mission was established in Ireland. Their place in Irish society appears to have been sustained until the eighth century as, according to the law tract the *Críth Gablach*, the ecclesiastical bishop was deemed the direct equivalent to the highest ranking *druí*, the *ollamh*. But, from this time, the *druíd* disappear from the historical record.

While both Old Irish and Latin were accepted as scholarly, high-status languages at this time, their precise linguistic functions differed, initially at least, for Latin scholars were termed *fir léighinn* – 'men of reading'. The Irish cultural norm was, of course, oral. Latin was the subject of systematic study in Ireland, certainly from the sixth century, and with time there developed a form of Latin that became recognisably Irish. This is known as Hesperic Latin and it was used not only in Ireland but was also introduced to many other parts of Europe by Irish Christian missions during the seventh and eighth centuries. The development of a written culture in Irish was made possible due to the introduction and establishment of Latin culture to Ireland. Also, it is recognised that one of the stimuli for this development was a sense of impending catastrophe which was a consequence of a plague that struck Ireland in the middle part of the seventh century. Other sections of the learned class were challenged by the new Latin Christian culture. Around AD 700, and in response to the advent of literacy in the Irish language, there were changes to the learned class in Irish society which give rise to the *fili* or *filid*. The *filid* emerged as a literate poetic class schooled in Latin culture. Their works included religious and historical works and noble eulogies. The role of the *filid* related to traditional knowledge, laws, language, grammar and lore, including *dinnshensas* – the lore of place-names, as well as poetic forms. They became integrated to the activities of the Church through the monastic scriptoriums until the twelfth century and the arrival of new religious orders from continental Europe.

Other, lesser, practitioners of poetry were not schooled in Latin culture and their mode of expression was wholly oral. These included the *admall*, who performed for lesser nobles; the *tuathbard*, who worked for the common landed class; and the *dul* or *cáinte*, who served warrior bands and were prohibited by the Church. The first writing in Latin by the native Irish dates to the seventh century. Such was the zeal with which the art of written culture was applied to the oral tradition that by the eighth century a wide range of subject matter had been committed in written form in both Latin and Irish. This included biblical texts, exegeses, penitentials, grammars, lives of saints, annals, treatises on kingship, canonical and secular law tracts and secular literature in poetic form. It was in this period that

substantial works originating in the pre-Christian oral culture, such as *Táin Bó Cuailgne* (The Cattle Raid of Cooley), probably first took literary form. It is in this sense that the longevity and continuity of the vernacular linguistic tradition in Ireland can be claimed to be unparalleled by any language in western and central Europe other than Latin, the language of Roman imperial grandeur and Roman Christian spirituality. Latin, however, was the dominant sacral language. The greater part of the 'Saints' Lives' was written in Latin. The principal compilation of canonical law dating to the late seventh and early eighth centuries, the *Collectio canonum Hibernensis*, was recorded in Latin. Latin was the language of the liturgy and would remain so in the Catholic Church in Ireland until the second half of the twentieth century (post-Vatican II). It would also remain the principal language of learning and intellectual debate until the early modern period and a central feature of the curricula of schools, universities and seminaries until the nineteenth century at least. In both of these instances it was ultimately replaced by English. The main material in Irish was secular. This included the annals, law tracts and poetry. The Annals of Ulster preserve in their fifteenth- and sixteenth-century manuscripts Irish from the early medieval period. Many of the law tracts, including the *Críth Gablach*, date to the seventh and eighth centuries.

The eighth to twelfth centuries

The transformation of Irish society through interaction with Latin culture in the post-Roman context was followed, from the ninth century, by a period of several centuries during which the external influences upon Ireland derived from another part of Europe and another culture that had not been under the suzerainty of Imperial Rome. The first Viking incursion into Ireland is recorded in 795 with a raid on 'Reachrainn', variously understood to be either the island of Lambay or that of Rathlin, but their language, Old Norse (known to the Scandinavians themselves as *dönsk tunga*), did not impact upon the Irish language until after the mid-ninth century (Greene, 1976). The Irish described the Vikings as *Lochlannaigh* – 'the people from the land of lakes' and they distinguished between the *Fingaiill*, meaning 'fair foreigners' and understood to be of Norwegian origins, and the *Dubhgaill*, meaning 'dark foreigners' and understood to be of Danish origins. By the ninth century an apparently hybrid population known as the *Gall-Gáidil* (Norse-Irish) is noted in the historical record. Up until the advent of the Normans in the twelfth century the Vikings in Ireland described themselves as *Ostmen*, meaning 'men of the east'. The linguistic impact, when it came, related in particular to personal names, place terms and certain specialised terms. For example, the term 'Ireland' is the product of Scandinavian influence, as the names for the provinces of Ulster, Leinster and Munster as rendered in English are the product of two Irish elements being joined in the manner of Old Norse

with the genitive 's' (Greene, 1976: 75). That Connacht, the westernmost historical province, is not rendered in this fashion is indicative of the more limited impact of the Vikings in this part of Ireland. Numerous coastal toponyms are of Scandinavian origin, for example *Wicklow–Vikingaló* and *Howth–Hofuð*. According to Greene (1976: 78) the earliest borrowing from Old Norse to Irish that can be identified with certainty can be dated to the ninth century, and that is the appearance of the term *jarl* [Old Norse]–*erall/iarla* [Old Irish]. This is an honorific term and first occurs in conjunction with personal names. It does not appear independently until much later. The nature of the impact of Old Norse on the Irish language in social terms is indicated by the volume of loan-words relating to seafaring and commerce. These terms include, for example:

[Old Norse–Modern Irish–Modern English]

Akkeri–ancaire–anchor;

Bátr–bád–boat;

Bjórr–beoir–beer;

Dorg–dorú–fishing-line;

Háborá–ábhar–rowlock;

Skaut–scód–sheet;

Styri–stiúir–rudder;

Langa–langa–ling;

Porskr–trosc–cod;

Mál–mál–tax;

Markaðr–margadh–market;

Penningr–pinginn–penny;

Skillingr–scilling–shilling.

By the close of the tenth century the Irish had borrowed many personal names from Old Norse. The most significant of these being *Uiginn* (Greene, 1976) or *uiging* [Modern Irish – Viking, sea-raider] (Bell, 1988), derived from the Old Norse term *vikingr*, meaning 'viking', and used in the surname form *Ó hUiginn* and Anglicised as O'Higgins or Higgins. It is from this period that the concept of surnames became more widely applied in Ireland in Irish. This innovation in nomenclature was related to more material concerns, in particular the ownership of land, as Smyth notes:

From c.1000 onwards, the proliferation of Irish surnames began spreading from the key elite families downwards. Distinctive surnames were a boundary-making device, distinguishing the dynastic heirs from the disinherited edges of the kin group who acquired other surnames. Family names became embedded in specific landed properties, making for a complex mosaic of both small and large territorial lordships and the construction of a close-knit decentralized culture.

(W.J. Smyth, 1993: 412)

Other broader and more significant changes occurred with regard to the Irish language in this period for it was in this context that the Old Irish evolved into Middle Irish. This entailed the erosion of the highly standardised written form of Old Irish and its replacement by more diverse practices. This change is not, according to Greene (1976: 81), due to the linguistic impact of Old Norse but instead relates to the broader social, economic and political processes which transformed Irish society at that time. The evolution to Middle Irish is of importance with regard to the social history of the Irish language for it implies the transformation of the functions of key socio-linguistic domains. Central to this was the emergence of urban society in Ireland in the early medieval period, associated in large part with the arrival of the Vikings but also related to indigenous innovation centred upon the larger ecclesiastical sites (Graham, 1993a). The Viking urban centres were all on coastal locations and developed into important ports. Each of these were set within their own particular hinterlands – for example, that of Dublin was known as *Dyflinarskíri*. While these rural hinterlands appear to have remained Irish from the point of view of language, Old Norse may well have been in continuous use as a spoken language for centuries after its initial introduction to Ireland. According to Greene the fact that Old Norse place-names were borrowed directly into English subsequent to the intervention of the Anglo-Normans in 1169 is evidence of its continuity in Dublin and other urban centres of Viking origin, namely Cork (est. 915), Limerick (est. 922), Waterford (est. 914) and Wexford (est. 921). In one case, that of Limerick, the original Irish name was borrowed into English through Old Norse – *Luimnech–Hlymrekr–Limerick*. It is suggested that a Nordic–Gaelic *creole* was developed by the Vikings during the centuries following their settlement in Ireland and the Gaelic-speaking parts of Scotland and the Isle of Man, but that this disappeared subsequent to the arrival of the Normans in Britain and Ireland other than on the Isle of Man. The cultural exchanges that were central to the Viking experience in Ireland were not merely confined to Ireland. As Graham points out, the fact that by the eleventh century the Irish were exercising overlordship of these towns is illustrative of the ‘partial assimilation’ (Graham, 1993a: 24) of the Vikings to Irish society; equally, the material culture of these towns being characteristically north-west European, rather than Celtic, Viking or Anglo-Saxon, shows the extent to which the socio-cultural compass of Ireland had been altered by the intervention of the Scandinavians.

The durability of Latin as a language of ecclesiastical learning is attested by Henry and Marsh-Micheli (1987), but they note increasing use of the Irish language in the monastic scriptoria for sacral and, especially so, for secular purposes:

Of the books that have survived, some – gospels, psalters, missals, hymn-books – are meant for liturgical use. A few manuscripts may

have been intended as textbooks in monastic schools. With the exception of some Old Irish hymns, they are all written in a mixture of Latin and Irish. On the other hand, Irish is used for the great collection of texts: *Lebor na hUidre* (Book of the Dun Cow), Rawlinson MSB 502, and the Book of Leinster, though it may be noted that Latin phrases and sentences occur in such texts. In there an essential place is given to secular literature – epics, poems, – and to historical and pseudo-historical matter such as genealogies, traditions of places, legendary lore of the ‘invasions of Ireland’.

(Henry and Marsh-Micheli, 1987: 781–3)

It is from this period of the eleventh century and, perhaps, the early twelfth century, that substantial works originating in the pre-Christian oral culture survive in written form having been committed to manuscript in the Irish language. This includes, for example, *Lebor na hUidre* (The Book of the Dun Cow), *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (literally ‘The Book of the Takings of Ireland’ or ‘The Book of the Settlements of Ireland’, more widely known as ‘The Book of Invasions’), *Cath Maige Tuired* (The Battle of Moytura), *Táin Bó Cuailgne* (The Cattle Raid of Cooley), *Scéla Mucce Meic Da Thó* (The Story of Mac Dathó’s Pig), *Lebor na Cert* (The Book of Rights) and *Fled Bricrenn* (Briciu’s Feast). This secularisation, and the Gaelicisation of the work of the monastic scriptoriums in the period subsequent to the establishment of the Viking urban settlements in Ireland from the mid-tenth century and prior to the intervention of the Anglo-Normans in the late twelfth century, marks their changing function in this period in general terms. According to some (Graham, 1993a: 23) the integration of the Church structure into secular society was a process that had its origins in the seventh century and continued until the eleventh. The depth of this transformation may be, in part, an unintended consequence of the eighth century *Céilé Dé* (Client of God) movement which sought to more clearly differentiate between the secular and religious activities associated with the monastic sites (Barry, 1987: 26). With regard to language shift, this transformation denotes the increasing democratisation of literacy in the Irish language, associated with the *filid* who were schooled in both native learned traditions and Latin ecclesiastical culture. It does not erode the position of Latin as the elevated language of the Church.

The twelfth to sixteenth centuries

The arrival of a people which we may describe as the Anglo-Normans from 1167, via Britain, brought the English language to Ireland. These English-speakers were in fact multilingual, being proficient in Norman French as well as English, although English may well have been the first language of the majority (Richter, 1985). French was, in all probability, in

general disuse by the fourteenth century (Bliss and Long, 1987), and on this point it is instructive to note that there is no mention of use of the French language in the Statute of Kilkenny of 1366, despite the fact that the document was written in French. A question of use of terms arises on the matter of the identity of these newcomers. They have been variously described as Cambro-Norman, Anglo-French, Anglo-Normans, Norman and Anglo-Irish. It is the case that in addition to their obvious Norman origins many of the newcomers were of Welsh, Flemish or Breton extraction – and they brought these languages with them too. These survive in personal names and place-names. The fact that they employed the English language as their dominant tongue allows for the use of the term ‘Anglo-Norman’, despite the fact that their territorial associations in Britain were with Wales and not England. By the late medieval period, however, they are understood to have distanced themselves from their Norman roots and, to varying degrees, have become increasingly Gaelic and English. In this period they can be described as Anglo-Irish. While they described themselves as ‘les Engleys néés en Irlande’ (‘the English of the land of Ireland’) and contemporary Irish sources describe them as ‘*saxain*’, that is ‘English’, they also had variously made adaptations to their being in Ireland in social, cultural, economic and political terms. But, whatever the historical ebbs and flows of identity, place and culture for this people, they retained a distinct sense of difference. As Smyth puts it, for example:

The Anglo-Irish adaptation of modified lineage systems, their use of excessive military exactions and elements of Brehon law as well as a rich involvement in and patronage of the Irish language and literature did not mask a sharp sense of separate identity, particularly in the great lordships of the Anglo-Irish dynasties.

(W.J. Smyth, 1993: 418)

The relationships between the Anglo-Normans and the Irish language were, therefore, substantial, varied and complex.

Perhaps the most substantial impact of the Anglo-Normans upon processes of language shift was their introduction of novel modes of administration. The nature and intensity of their activities in this sphere transformed the domain of administration in Ireland, with various effects upon the social place of the Irish language. The Anglo-Normans also contributed to the transformation of other key language domains. The immediate legacy of the Anglo-Normans to professional historians is ‘a mass of material ... relating to the fiscal and legal minutiae of everyday government’ (Graham, 1993b: 59), and the languages of this were Latin, French and, eventually, English. For example, Watt (1987) notes that the principal source material for the administrative affairs of the Normans in Ireland, termed ‘*indenturae*’ and ‘*conventiones*’, were in Latin or French. This

domain was never, at any stage during the medieval period, penetrated by the Irish language. In this regard the general position of the Irish language may be read from the Statute of Kilkenny of 1366. This document, which stated that ‘many English of the said land, forsaking the English language, fashion, mode of riding, laws, and usages, live and govern themselves according to the manners, fashion and language of the Irish enemies’, should not be read as evidence of the popular resurgence of Irish but rather of the first formal statement of policy intent for the extirpation of the Irish language (Bliss and Long, 1987: 713) and in particular amongst the English in Ireland, in their lordships and in the Pale:

[I]f any English or Irish living amongst the English use the Irish language amongst themselves contrary to this ordinance and thereof be attaint, that his lands and tenements, if he have any, be seized into the hands of his immediate lord until he come to one of the places of our lord the King and find sufficient surety to adopt and use the English language and then that he have restitution of his said lands by writ to issue out of the same place. In the case that such person have not lands or tenements, then his body shall be taken by some of the officers of our lord the King and committed to the next gaol, there to remain until he or another in his name find sufficient surety in the manner aforesaid.

(Statute of Kilkenny, 1366)

Such a proclamation could only have been considered rational by its authors because it was also possible to imagine such a thing happening based upon the actual experience of language in the domain of administration and governance. It could be argued that it fell to the Tudor revolution in government of the late medieval and early modern period to realise the full implications of this. Thus, as Bliss and Long put it: ‘the statute of 1366 makes it clear that English is the established language, whose place is now contested by Irish’ (Bliss and Long, 1987: 713). Bliss and Long (1987: 714) describe the eventual hegemony of the English language in this domain in the following terms. French and Latin were both used in acts of parliament and other documents of government and administration, such as records, statutes, ordinances, from 1310 up until 1472. After 1472 the English language began to be used in addition. From around 1450 the use of Latin began to decline in this domain and by 1500 English was the sole language. By the close of the fifteenth century Poyning’s Law (1494) set the policy tone whereby each subject loyal to the English Crown was charged to use the English language: ‘Be it enacted that every person or persons, the King’s true subjects, inhabiting this land of Ireland, of what estate, condition or degree he or they be, or shall be, to the uttermost of their power, cunning, and knowledge, shall use and speak commonly the English tongue and language.’ That said, the limited popular use of the English

language in this period is shown in its use in secular and creative literary forms up until around 1400, after which it disappears not to re-emerge in this context until the early modern period. More broadly speaking, the Statute of Kilkenny can also be read as a response to the structural transformations that were common to Europe in general at that time, driven largely by the demographic and consequent social impact of the Black Death of 1348–1349.

The failure of the Irish language to penetrate the domain of administration and governance accounts for the general paucity of material in Irish up until the thirteenth century. The Irish language sources that do exist in this period pertain to the ‘literature of kingship’ (Watt, 1987: 314) – that is, the laws, the annals and the praise-verse of court poets. The nature of the sources in this period also relates to the substantial transformation of the structure of the Church in Ireland that was initiated by St Malachy (d. 1148) through the introduction of continental-style monastic houses – the Cistercians and the Augustinian Canons Regular – and is the Irish response to an ecclesiastical reform movement set in motion by Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085). This process was encouraged and reinforced by the Anglo-Normans during the thirteenth century with the further introduction of Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Augustinian friars (from which emerged the Observant reform movement, founded in Co. Sligo in 1423). From this point the Church in Ireland began to abandon the cultivation of native learning (Carey, 1987: 689). The Cistercian religious order which was brought to Ireland in 1142 was at the forefront of this and eventually came to oppose members of their order conversing in Irish, and to the writing of annals in Irish as well as opposing the use of Brehon law (Simms, 1989). These orders were initially strongest in those areas under Anglo-Norman lordship of that of the English Crown, but during the fifteenth century there was a dramatic increase in the building of new friaries in the north and west of Ireland (Barry, 1993: 111), where the Irish language was most dominant. Perhaps more than ninety houses were built in Ireland in the fifteenth century by the various orders – Franciscan, Dominican, Augustinian and Carmelite. The Franciscans were most active, establishing more than forty houses in Ulster and Connacht. During this period a substantial body of devotional material was translated into Irish – largely by the Franciscans but also by others within the reformist Observant movement. On the whole, however, the continental religious orders were vehicles for Anglicisation in the domain of organised religion during this period.

The twelfth-century reforms of the Church in Ireland resulted in the secularisation of the Irish literary tradition. It was in this context that the *fili* (a literate, learned class, schooled in both Irish and Latin culture and associated with the monastic scriptoria) and the *baird* (Eng. ‘bards’ – understood as performers of the Irish oral culture), the secular poetic class, began to form a single, learned class known as the *aés dána* (meaning ‘people of gift, skill, gift or art’). The group termed themselves

filidh or *fir dhána* (meaning ‘men of gift, skill, gift or art’). From this arose a number of outstanding secular professional learned families and their associated bardic schools located in particular geographical areas and serving the related powerful secular dynasties. For example, the Mac an Bhaired family in Donegal were patronised by the Ó Domhnaill dynasty. Other prominent bardic families with associated important bardic schools include the Ó Dálaigh in Cork, the Ó hUiginn of Sligo and the Ó hEóidhasa in Fermanagh. The instruction of these schools comprised the areas of language (both Irish and Latin), grammar, poetic metrics, genealogy, law, lore and history. The activity of these families led to a revival in literary activity in the Irish language, the production of the canon of great medieval books in Irish and the corpus of bardic poetry in eulogy of secular Gaelic patrons. It was in this period that compilations such as *Leabhar Bhaile an Mhóta* (The Book of Ballymote) and *Lebor Leacáin* (The Great Book of Lecan) were drawn together, for example. The nature of the language shift in the secular learned tradition in this period is exemplified by the genealogies, written in Latin only in the earliest period, then written in both Latin and Irish during the seventh century to the tenth, and by the late medieval period recorded almost wholly in the Irish language. By the fourteenth century, and most especially during the fifteenth century, the *fir dhána* also enjoyed the employment of Anglo-Norman lay patrons. This may have been a political necessity for the Anglo-Norman lords in order that they make legitimate and authentic, in accordance with Gaelic-Irish practice, their claims over land and people in Ireland. The Book of Fermoy and the Psalter of Mac-Richard Butler are products of this cultural interchange. A particular product of the interaction of Gaelic-Irish and Anglo-Norman culture was a body of love poetry termed *dánta grádha*. The *dánta grádha* were commonly produced from the fourteenth century up until the seventeenth century and are the result of the spreading of a style of poetry, for performance in musical style, known as *amour courtois* or *fine amour* (Eng. ‘courtly love’). The style originated in the *langue d’oc* region of southern France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and its language was the popular vernacular of that region – namely, occitan. The material was usually written by a *troubadour* but largely performed by others known as *jongleurs* (Eng. ‘minstrels’). The language of courtly love is sophisticated, and the *troubadours* were usually well educated and many of their number were of aristocratic background. The form became popular in the English court during the thirteenth century. From the point of view of language shift it denotes the elevation of common vernaculars. For example, it is in this context that the work of Chaucer (?1345–1400) in the story of the formation of the English language is understood. The acceptance of the common vernacular as a suitable vehicle for the highest forms of cultural expression in the court was undoubtedly a factor in shaping the attitude of the Anglo-Normans towards the practices of the *fir dhána*, as well as towards the Irish lan-

guage. The fact that *amour courtois* was a prestige art form no doubt eased the adoption of the continental European style by the *fir dhána*. It is clear from the evidence that Anglo-Norman lords (the Earl of Desmond Gerald Fitzgerald, 1338–1398, is understood to have been the first), Gaelic-Irish lords (Maghnus Ó Dómhnaill of Donegal, d. 1563) and *fir dhána* alike produced examples of work in this style. Aside from *dánta grádha*, a hierarchy of literary styles and conventions relates to particular functions of learned literature in the Irish language and its practitioners. The most prestigious mode, *dán díreach*, was exclusive to the most learned of the *fir dhána* and their patrons. A less-demanding style was *brúilingeacht* and was the employ of lesser-learned *fir dhána*, including the hereditary practitioners of history and law. The least demanding was *óglachas*. This was used by the lowest members of the *fir dhána*, often for comic purpose. Historical records show that by the fourteenth century the *fir dhána* were educated in bardic lay schools. Under the guidance of an *ollamh* (master; Modern Irish ‘professor’) these provided training in the main forms of native secular learning, namely *dán* (poetry), *féineachas* (Brehon law), *seanchas* (history), *ceol* (music) and *leigheas* (medicine). Taken together these developments comprise the stimulus to the development of Classical or Early Modern Irish. This form of the Irish language was highly standardised and used uniformly through the Irish-speaking world to the extent that the *fir dhána* could, and did, practise their craft in any part of Ireland, or for that matter Gaelic-speaking Scotland, without any adjustment of language. Bardic schools remained important until the seventeenth century.

The exclusion of the Irish language learned traditions by the new religious orders is paralleled in the state and status of the Irish language in an urban context. According to Watt the Irish language was regarded as a significant indicator of difference between the Irish and urban-dwelling Anglo-Normans. For example, the citizens of Cork petitioned King Edward I of England in the late 1270s, protesting the appointment of an Irish-speaker to the position of collector of customs as ‘Irish-speakers were enemies of the state’ – ‘Hybernica lingua vobis et vestris sit inimica’ (Watt, 1987: 346). Evidence regarding the ethnic geography of the medieval Irish town, such as it is, suggests that Irish-speakers were structurally excluded. Records show that Irish-speakers were certainly present but that they may well have been restricted to a particular part of the urban site, designated ‘Irishtown’. At least ten of the larger medieval towns are known from the historical record to have possessed such an ‘Irishtown’. The levels of segregation could be high and its nature violent. Walls were built around the Irishtown of Limerick, while the Irishtown of Kilkenny had both walls and a separate borough constitution (Graham, 1993b: 88). It also appears to be the case that while the Anglo-Normans accommodated themselves to the Irish language and native cultural forms in many ways the urban centres are set apart from this. For example,

Nicholls notes an anonymous early sixteenth-century source that indicates the widespread use of the Irish language by the Anglo-Normans throughout Ireland, excepting the urban centres: '[A]ll the englysshe folke of the said countyes (ie the countyes that obey not the kinges laws) ken of Iryshe habyt, of Iryshe language and of Iryshe condicions, except the cities and the walled townes' (Nicholls, 1987: 422). On the whole, in the early urban environments the use of the English language was defended against encroachment by the Irish language (Adams, 1970: 162; Ó Cuív, 1976: 509). More generally speaking, urban sites are remarkable by their relative rarity in Gaelic Ireland. The only possible urban sites in the early medieval period are certain important ecclesiastical centres such as Armagh (Co. Armagh), Clogher (Co. Tyrone), Clonfert (Co. Galway) and Rosscarbery (Co. Cork) (Graham, 1993b: 88–90). By the late medieval period urban governance was the preserve of local and largely Anglo-Norman oligarchies. Gaelic patronage of towns was limited to a very small handful of sites, including Sligo, Cavan and Granard in Co. Longford. Thus, Irish was not a language of early urban governance and urbanisation in Ireland.

The Irish language also yielded significant ground in the domain of law. While the size of the area subject to English common law varied during the period of the twelfth century to the sixteenth, English common law secured a niche in Irish society. It was instrumental in making Royal authority effective in those parts of the island that belonged to the Crown:

By the middle of the thirteenth century, the imposition on the colony of the developing common law of England was well in hand, introducing into 'colonial' Ireland a remarkably centralized legal system and a highly effective instrument for the extension of royal power.

(W.J. Smyth, 1993: 413–14)

The native Irish were debarred from recourse to English common law until the early thirteenth century when the most prominent native Irish dynastic families were granted the right. It was not until 1331 that the right was extended more generally, although the unfree were still excluded. As the power of the English monarch contracted in Ireland regional variation became the norm. As Smyth notes, many Anglo-Norman dynasties made use of both English common law or native Brehon law, or even devised their own legal codes, as suited their purposes:

The most striking feature of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ireland was the expansion and consolidation of the great lordships into essentially autonomous regions. Each of these was dominated by key dynasties who developed their own spheres of administration and in some cases – as with the Butlers and the O'Reillys – their own regional legal codes as well.

(W.J. Smyth, 1993: 416)

The interchange between Irish Brehon law and English common law is further evidenced by the appearance of loan-words into Irish at this time, such as 'quest', 'attorney', 'executor', 'feofment' and 'livery of seisin' (Watt, 1987: 317–18). Despite the plurality of clients, however, the two forms of law remained the domains of mutually exclusive professional groups. The right to practise English common law was held by professional lawyers termed 'serjeants' who were associated with the Dublin bench, whereas training in Brehon law could only be gained through the bardic schools. Therefore, the application of one of the two forms of law implies the use of different languages in this domain and can be taken as an indicator of language shift in itself. Thus, the geography of law in medieval Ireland is characterised by areas in which English common law prevailed and other areas where Brehon law was predominant and, between the two, there were areas in which a mixture of the two were practised (Figure 3.1).

The Irish language remained, overwhelmingly, the *lingua franca* of the common population. The Irish language was acquired, to some extent, by the Anglo-Normans. Many of the Anglo-Norman dynastic families were certainly competent in a number of languages, as were most other western Europeans of their class. For example, the library of the Earl of Kildare is known to have comprised over a hundred titles in 1526 and of these 36 were in French, 32 in Latin, 22 in English and 19 in Irish. Their means of acquiring the Irish language may be read from some of the historical sources. For example, a royal decree of 1360 to the Sheriff of Kilkenny notes that (from Bliss and Long, 1987): 'many of the English nation in the marches and elsewhere have again become like Irishmen ... and learn to speak the Irish tongue, and send their children among the Irish to be raised and taught the Irish tongue, so that the people of the English race have for the greater part become Irish'. This suggests that the practice of fosterage, an integral feature of inter-dynastic relations, may have been central to this process. One might also infer from this that the Irish language was not of common use within prominent Anglo-Norman families. With regard to the social language practices of lesser Anglo-Normans it may be useful to refer to alternative indices of language shift. W.J. Smyth (1993: 416–18) suggests that the 'cumulative currents of more intangible cultural interactions ... came to be enshrined in townland, family and Christian names'. For example, the Anglo-Norman place-name element 'town' is dominant in east Leinster and south Wexford. It is present, but less dominant, in the areas of Co. Kilkenny, south Tipperary, Limerick and east Cork, while in other areas again, such as Westmeath, east Connaught and east Leinster, the 'town' element may be noted but is clearly a minority phenomenon. Old English (as the Anglo-Normans were known in the seventeenth century) family surnames from 1660 poll taxes reveal a more widespread distribution. The Gaelicisation of Old English surnames appears to have been much more prevalent in Munster than in Leinster,

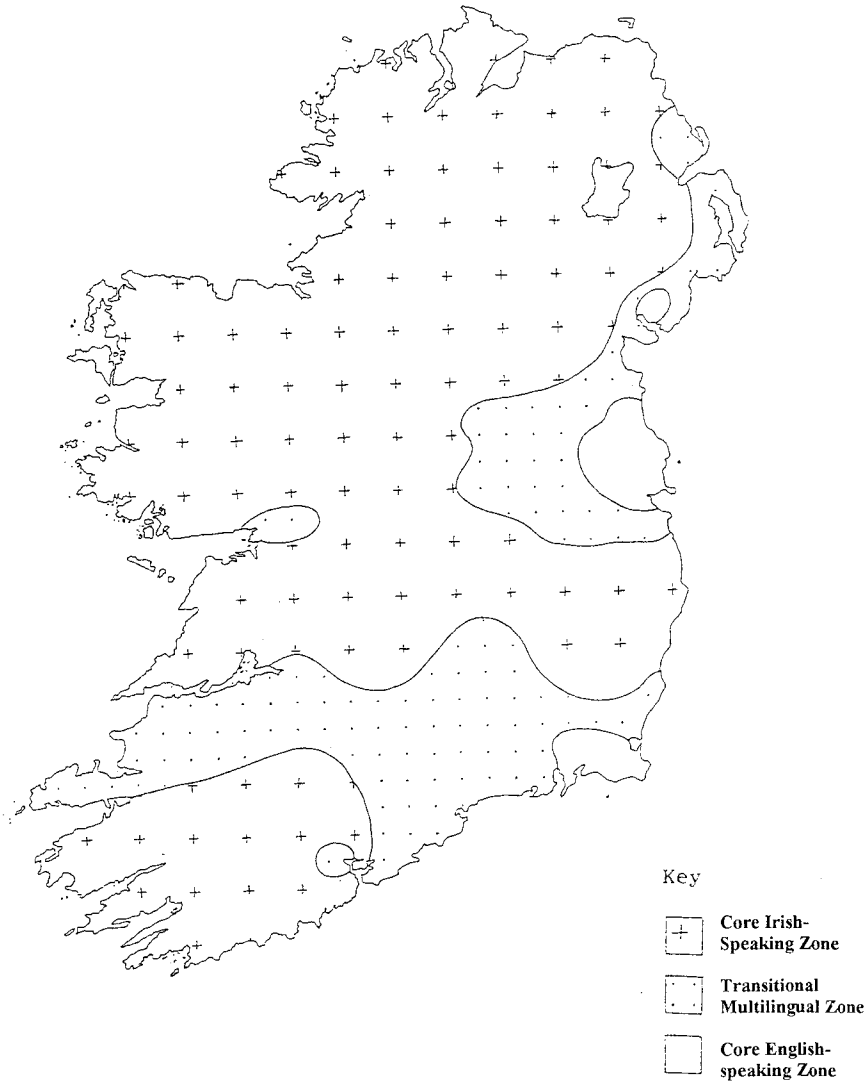


Figure 3.1 The ethnolinguistic situation in Ireland, c.1500.

especially those areas directly administered by the English Crown. Very high concentrations of Old English surnames are discerned in urban centres such as Cork, Dublin, Limerick and Carlingford in south-east Ulster. Changing patterns of use of Christian names amongst Anglo-Normans, and what Smyth terms the ‘Gaelic-Irish’, reveal, perhaps, the most intimate cultural exchanges. The most substantial shift from Irish language to Anglo-Norman Christian names in this period occurred in

Leinster while the most resilient areas are mid- and west Ulster and south-west Munster. East Munster, the Leinster–Ulster borderlands, east Connaught and Clare are areas of transition. According to Down, by the second half of the thirteenth century many, albeit a minority, of the ‘Gaelic Irish’ had adopted English names (Down, 1987: 443–4).

Conclusions

The continuity of the Irish language in this period may be understood as a heterogeneous process. The notion of a radical continuity is employed by Graham to describe the complex process of settlement formation in Ireland in this period in relation to a diverse sense of place:

Geographically, the radical definition of continuity implies a fusion of Anglo-Norman and Gaelic-Irish cultural, political, economic and settlement phenomena which in turn determined Ireland’s particularity of place during the Middle Ages. Identity of place stems from the configuration of that fusion rather than through the predominance of one or other of these cultural entities. As we have seen, the Gaelic-Irish were irrevocably changed by their contact with the Anglo-Normans, but through the same process, the latter mutated into the Anglo-Irish.
(Graham, 1993b: 66)

Similarly, Barry (1987: 197; 1993: 100) notes that the nature of the evolution of society in Ireland in this period was significantly shaped by a number of key events of the first half of the fourteenth century – namely, the Bruce invasion (1315–1318), the Great European Famine (1315–1317) and the Black Death. The general European response was to undergo a profound structural transformation, a process that is characterised as the transition from feudalism to capitalism (W.J. Smyth, 1993: 414–15). The radical continuity of what defines the Irish language in this period must be set in this context and its transformation may be characterised in a number of ways. By the late medieval period the bardic schools of a number of professional secular learned families are central to the vitality of the Irish language in a number of high-status domains. Irish is a learned language with respect to history, grammar, law, place-name lore, genealogy, grammar, medicine, music and poetic language. As a learned language it is patronised by all the secular dynasties on the island. The Irish language is not, however, a linguistic hegemon in this period. It has no exclusive claim on the domain of law, its place within canonical learning is much reduced, its function as a formal language of administration and governance is limited, and it is segregated within urban contexts. That said, it remains the common tongue of the greater part of the population and, in its written form, it possesses a uniformity of expression that defines a common linguistic polity the length and breadth of Ireland.

4 The early modern and the modern period

Introduction

This second of the ‘Histories’ of the Irish language comprises two distinct historical periods. Certain key moments are adopted as signals of change. The enactment of the ‘Ordinances for the Government of Ireland’ in 1534 is taken as a substantial indication of the beginnings of the early modern period in Ireland. This was a period of military conquest and colonisation and it continued until the conclusion of the Williamite War of 1689–1691 and the subsequent land settlement. Beyond the immediate impact of warfare, dispossession and plantation, the importation of the modern modes of governance to Ireland are explored for their impact on the state and status of the Irish language. An examination of the relationship between the language and various forms of social identity in this period shows that the Irish language was regarded as a significant indicator of socio-economic identity, defined by its dissociation from modernity. For the purposes of this work, the modern period is understood to extend from 1695 to 1920; that is, from the introduction of the Penal Laws until the Government of Ireland Act. The decline of the Irish language as a popular vernacular in this period is considered to be the continuation of a process begun during the early modern period, although the actual rate of decline may well have been accelerated by increasing industrialisation and urbanisation. Other factors are identified as having contributed to this decline, including the adoption of English as the language of political mobilisation during the first half of the nineteenth century and the development of a politicised Irish diaspora in the wake of the Great Famine of 1845–1849. Towards the close of the nineteenth century a revival of interest in the Irish language dramatically reshaped its symbolic capital in a positive fashion whilst the geography of the spoken tongue is characterised by ongoing contraction.

The early modern period

The early modern period in Ireland is marked by the appearance of other newcomer identities to the island. The plantations instigated by successive Tudor and Stuart monarchs between 1534 and 1610 brought many immigrants to Ireland from Scotland and England. The plantations were of two types. The plantations of Ulster and of Munster were directed by the English government and intended as strategic geopolitical instruments. As a result of the Protestant Reformation England was diplomatically isolated and militarily vulnerable. Catholic Ireland, with its frontier mentality, was considered to be a particular point of vulnerability, a point that is reinforced by the attempts on various occasions by Anglo-Norman and Gaelic Irish lords to seek allies in Catholic France and Spain but especially so in the matter of the Kildare rebellion of 1534–1535 and the subsequent efforts of the Geraldine League during the late 1530s to grant the sovereignty of Ireland to the Catholic king of Scotland. The conclusion of the Nine Years War of 1593 to 1603 in favour of the English Crown and the subsequent departure from Ireland by the Gaelic Irish leaders in 1607 allowed for the widespread confiscation of land by the English government and for it to be made available to settlers from Britain. Plantations of the second type were *ad hoc* and largely private affairs, although they were encouraged by the English government and benefited from the fact of the implementation of the larger and more strategic officially sponsored plantations. They were common during the seventeenth century. By the middle of the seventeenth century there were probably 22,000 English settlers in Munster and 15,000 English and Scots in Ulster. The total population of Ireland at around this time was c.2.1 million. According to contemporary sources the newcomer identities were described as ‘the English interest’ and ‘the Scottish interest’ or, occasionally, ‘the British interest’ (J. Smyth, 1993). These identities were divided by religion and geography. The Scottish or British interest originated from Scotland and were Presbyterian in matters of religious belief. They settled largely in Ulster. The ‘English interest’ largely comprised the Anglican landed aristocracy. From the point of view of language the latter group reintroduced the English language while the former introduced the language of Lowland Scots.

The influx of peoples from Scotland and England caused readjustments in senses of identity and loyalty amongst both the Gaelic Irish and the descendants of the Anglo-Normans at a strategic, if not popular, level. By the sixteenth century the descendants of the Anglo-Normans referred to themselves as ‘Englishmen born in Ireland’. Contemporary commentators describe them as the ‘Anglo-Hiberni’ (Stanihurst, 1547–1618) and the ‘English-Irish’ (Moryson, 1566–1630). In Gaelic Irish sources the term ‘*sean Ghaill*’ (‘Old English’) emerges from the 1620s in order to differentiate those of Anglo-Norman descent from the new English-speaking identities, styled ‘*nua Ghaill*’ (‘New English’). In academic literature they are

generally referred to as the Anglo-Irish, an indication of their adherence to a form of colonial nationalism – a term applied to the nationalist sentiment expressed by groups of colonial descent for the colony in which they reside. Examples of this include the American patriotism of the British colonists of eighteenth-century North America, or the various nineteenth-century nationalisms of Latin America by colonists of Spanish descent in South America. Anderson (1991) also suggests the term ‘creole nationalism’ for the phenomenon. This readjustment of identity is of great significance for the Irish language as the Gaelic Irish and the Anglo-Irish located their common ground in terms of religious identity rather than in language. For example, James Fitzmaurice related the cause against the Tudor state to that of Catholicism during the second Desmond rebellion (1579–1583). Also, in 1599, at the height of the Nine Years War, Hugh O’Neill, the leader of the Gaelic Irish in the field, declared the aim of creating a unified and autonomous Catholic Ireland to be run by the Gaelic Irish and the Anglo-Irish together. The readjustments to senses of identity in Ireland and the reintroduction of the English language, coupled with the severe structural changes in social, political and economic terms wrought by the Tudor conquest and colonisation, had profound consequences for the Irish language. Such was the extent of language shift that by the close of the seventeenth century the Irish language was detached or becoming distanced from all significant language domains and being replaced by the English language.

The origins of the increasing intervention by the Tudor state in Irish affairs that define the early modern period in Ireland reside in the instigation of the Reformation in England by Henry VIII, and the publication of the ‘Ordinances for the Government of Ireland’ in 1534 represents the initial impact of the radical new policy direction with regard to this Catholic island (MacCurtain, 1972: 29). The legislation that brought about a Kingdom of Ireland in 1541 was the product of a Tudor monarch intent upon the incorporation of Ireland to the English state, and when it was presented to the Irish parliament in that year it had to be read in Irish in order that all of the assembled Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Irish members might understand. The translation of the text to Irish in this manner serves only to underline the opportunistic approach taken by the ‘New English’ towards the Irish language. The particular means of the expansion of the Tudor state in Ireland had the cumulative effect of progressively eroding the instrumental value of the Irish language in the most comprehensive manner. This period is a watershed in the social history of the Irish language. It is possible that the ambitions of the Tudor state in Ireland may not have been conceived in a wholly coherent and strategic manner by the agents of the state, as Smyth, for example, puts it:

The Tudor conquest may not have been a clash between a highly centralized absolutist state and a tribal society. Rather, it was a long and

bitter struggle between a modernizing centralized English state and a country where very large territorial entities had evolved. These were based on the forging of ambivalent links between the formal administrative regions of the lordships and the more dynamic functional regions pivoting around the ports.

(W.J. Smyth, 1993: 416)

However, the impact of their actions upon the Irish language, whether strategically conceived or otherwise, was comprehensive and far-reaching. Before the close of the sixteenth century the reform of government in Ireland had brought about its complete Anglicisation in theory if not in practice (Crawford, 1993). The practical incompleteness should not be allowed to conceal the fact that the reforms in this area had a significant impact upon the function of the Irish language from the point of their introduction – for example, the policy of surrender and re-grant which was designed to facilitate the expansion of the influence of the English Crown through the granting of tenure under English common law to Gaelic Irish lords on the condition of their fealty to the Tudor monarch. This provided Gaelic Irish lords with access to a powerful ally in cases of dispute over territory, a permanent feature of Brehon law on the relationships between sovereignty, people and land. Under the process of surrender and re-grant the lord would first of all recognise the English monarch as his sovereign and surrender his lands. He would then apply for a peerage and the grant of those lands while renouncing his Gaelic title and committing himself to promote English law and customs. Finally, the subsequent legal rights and duties of his vassals and kinsmen would be determined and the documents of grant and peerage enrolled in the chancery, the secretariat of the English government in Ireland and seated in Dublin. The policy was periodically successful for the English Crown in bringing about the submission of Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Irish lords alike, as, for example, the O'Neill became Earl of Tyrone in 1542. It also proved useful in breaking-up over-powerful lords such as with the partition of Monaghan (1590–1591). In this the ambiguous attitude of native Irish lords towards the Tudor administration was a key feature (Elliott, 1988: 72; Gillespie, 1995). Minor Gaelic lords in particular became evermore eager to better secure their claim to territorial possessions through gaining recognition of their ownership in English common law (O'Dowd, 1981; Duffy, 1981). It was around this time that the Irish word for the English language '*Béarla*' had been coined, meaning 'technical language' (Ó Cuív, 1976: 510). From the 1540s practices recognised by Brehon law, such as 'gavelkind' (whereby land was periodically divided between all male members of a clan) and 'tanistry' (whereby the legitimate inheritor to a lordship might be identified from among a number of possible claimants), were accommodated in the practices of the court of chancery. The arbitration allowed for by the Chancery was especially suited to the resolution of the claims of competing *tánaistí*

[sing. *tánaiste*]. These practices were, however, made redundant in the cases in 1606 and 1607 respectively. The introduction of regional provincial presidencies for Munster and Connacht during the 1560s, staffed by officials that were either English or from the Pale, and the establishment of the Court of Castle Chamber at the same time, modelled on the English Star Chamber, contributed to the spread of the English language in conjunction with English common law in the late medieval period. From the early seventeenth century the local justices of the assize were held on a regular basis in all 32 of the counties of Ireland, and it is in this period that official and legal documents begin to appear only in English. Leases in Irish, for example, disappear by the middle of the seventeenth century (O'Brien, 1989: 155). It is in this period, therefore, that the Irish language concedes its functions as a language of high status and power.

This shift is reflected in the changing attitudes of the Gaelic Irish towards the instrumental value of the Irish language. O'Brien (1989) draws from contemporary English sources (John Davies in 1612) which refer to the fact that many of the Gaelic Irish send their children to school to learn the English language: 'and because they find a great inconvenience in moving their suites by an interpreter; they do for the most part send their children to schools especially to learn the English language'. The matter of education in the late medieval period in Ireland was not an entirely straightforward affair as the practice of fosterage, through which a child gained the education deemed appropriate according to the social status of its parents, had a significant impact on the nature of the education of the children of Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Irish dynastic families in particular. Fosterage is understood as a practice whereby a child was placed with another family, either in recognition of kinship ties or as an expression of the political allegiance or submission of one lordship to another. In order to make their fealty to the English monarch explicit many Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Irish lords sent their sons on fosterage to English courts. For example, Hugh O'Neill (c.1550–1616), styled the 2nd Earl of Tyrone in 1585, spent periods of fosterage with Sir Henry Sidney at Ludlow Castle in Shropshire and Sidney residences in Kent and in London. It is probable that he also spent periods of fosterage in the Pale. In the case of Shane O'Neill, the assassin of the father of Hugh O'Neill, his rhetoric of vehement opposition to the English language is undermined by the fact that he had his son spend long periods of time on fosterage at English courts (Cahill, 1938, 1939; Ó Cuív, 1976: 523; Canny, 1970; Simms, 1987: 130, 131). That the practice of fosterage, according to Watt (1987: 320), was central to the continuity of the Irish social fabric makes its penetration by the English language during the sixteenth century very significant with regard to the erosion of the place of the Irish language in the socio-political orbit of power-brokers in Irish society.

Attitudes towards the English language amongst the Gaelic Irish indicate that it was held in considerable regard. The acquisition of the lan-

guage was seen by some of the Gaelic Irish elite as a mark of distinction. For example, the poet Cúndún notes as his achievements mastery over chess, the harp, hunting, riding, spear throwing, and the Spanish and English languages (O'Riordain, 1990). Poetic displeasure, as evidenced in historical sources, at the English-speakers newly arrived in Ireland, and others of the Gaelic Irish acquiring the English tongue, appears to bear more upon the elitist disdain of Cúndún, and those of his class, towards the low socio-economic status of both the English-speaking incomers and their Gaelic imitators. This attitude is later borne out in the poetry of Daibhi Ó Bruadair (c.1625–1698):

Nach ait an nós so ag mórchuid d'fhearaibh Éireann
d'at go nó le mortus maingléiseach,
giodh tais a dtreoir ar chódaibh gallchléire
ní chanaid glór gairbhBhérla.
[How queer this mode assumed by many men of Erin,
With haughty, upstart ostentation lately swollen,
Though codes of foreign clerks they fondly strive to master,
They utter nothing but a ghost of strident English.]
(trans. Caerwyn Williams and Ford, 1992: 214)

Similar sentiments are expressed by the seventeenth-century author(s) of *Pairlement Chloinne Tomás*, describing the family which is the focus of the work as 'coarse and brutish peasants, gluttonous and quarrelsome, aping the gentry, trying to dress fashionably, too low to understand the meaning of refinement, but lost in admiration of a man who could talk broken English' (Ó Cuív, 1976: 535). Thus, in this period attitudes regarding a shift from the Irish language to English were largely determined by ideas of social status rather than sense of ethnicity or of national identity (e.g. Canny, 1982: 105). This mindset was common at all levels of Irish society. For example, O'Brien, following MacCarthy-Morrogh (1986), argues that there was a quantitative shift in popular attitudes towards the Irish language in the late sixteenth century and the early seventeenth: 'by the early seventeenth century the phenomenon of social mobility had become so entrenched that "indigenous Irish speakers" in Munster regarded English "as the tongue of advancement"' (O'Brien, 1989: 153). MacCarthy-Morrogh notes that discerning such historical linguistic patterns and trends at this level in society is a matter of some complexity:

Whether they could speak the same language is extremely difficult to determine ... From casual references, its evidence is contradictory, and the general rule that the countryside spoke Irish and the towns English is riddled with exceptions. Two points are worth making. An examination of the port books show a steady supply of books being imported from England including grammars, hornbooks and other

children's books. Among these imports came the new fangled device of spectacles. For the growing reading population the medium had to be English. Then there is plentiful evidence of bilingualism, not just from the Old English families who might have had the opportunity and need for exercising both languages, nor from indigenous Irish-speakers learning English as the tongue for advancement, but from a surprising number of settlers who could understand Irish.

A different language might well have discomfited the visitor but there were few areas where nobody could speak some sort of English. Monoglot Englishmen could survive quite easily.

(MacCarthy-Morrogh, 1986: 189)

Most commentators agree that by the close of the seventeenth century it was the English language, and not Irish, that was the language of popular literacy (Ó Ciosáin, 1997). It was the fate of the Irish language, in its Classical Early Modern form, to be the archaic literary dialect of a redundant mandarin caste that was the *flidh* (Kiberd, 2000: 4, 13, 38). For example, according to Stapleton, an Irish cleric working from Antwerp during the first half of the seventeenth century, the decline in the condition of the Irish language was related to the linguistic conservatism of the poetic and learned elite:

Qua ratione consentaneum est, ut nos Hiberni nostram linguam & idioma retineamus, excolamus & extollamus, quae, quod ita iacet deserta, quasi in oblivionem iret,tribuendum vitio est linguae Hibernicae Authoribus atque Poëtis, qui eam verborum obscuriorum varietate offuscaverunt. [And for that reason it is fitting that we Irish hold onto, cultivate, and raise up our native language and speech, whose present neglect, nearly to the point of oblivion, is to be blamed on the bad style of literary and poetical Irishmen, who have obfuscated it under a welter of overly obscure words].

(trans. by Leerssen, 1986: 300–1)

The association of the English language to modernity and socio-economic advancement is reinforced by the fact that it was a language of the radical and new technology that was print. In contrast, of the several hundred books printed in Europe during the course of the seventeenth century less than six were in the Irish language (O'Brien, 1989). Accepting Anderson's thesis on the significance of what he describes as 'print-capital' for language, cultural identity and the evolution of the modern nation-state, the failure of the Irish language to penetrate this domain has profound implications. As a result the Irish language does not become the language of the political imagination at the outset of modernity; it is not a vehicle for a singular and cohesive sense of nationality. Instead, the potential for the Irish language to be divisive in this sphere is thus set. It is also

during this period of transition to modernity that there is a historical shift in the practice of translation that is indicative of the relative importance of the Irish language. From the ninth century up until the late medieval period the adaptation of texts into Irish flourished. This included classical, literary and non-literary genres. Clearly, there existed a diverse and literate audience for material in the Irish language until the close of the sixteenth century. Activity of this nature more or less ceases until the foundation of the Irish Free State in the early twentieth century, and then the translation of works into Irish is largely a state-sponsored affair. From the late medieval period the first substantial works of translation from Irish into English are completed. For example, the Annals of Clonmacnoise were translated into English in 1627, Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (written between 1618 and 1634) was translated by another scribe as he was finishing the work. Translation into English punctuates the modern period, taking varied guises. The Celticism that was a feature of literary circles in London, Edinburgh and Dublin in the eighteenth century prompted much activity, including Charlotte Brooke's 1789 anthology of poetry in translation entitled *Reliques of Irish Poetry*. During the nineteenth century very many of the Anglo-Irish literati were engaged in the translation of work from Irish, culminating in the remarkable period of activity which saw, for example, the foundation of the Gaelic League as the nineteenth century drew to a close. The significance of this shift is that from the early modern period the Irish language was no longer used as a means of introducing the product of other forms of cultural expression to the Irish; this would be done via the English language. Also, the Irish language was increasingly recognised by the Anglo-Irish only as a means of recovering or engaging with the past.

However reduced, the Irish language remained the popular vernacular during the early modern period. This much is clear to the extent that the language was regarded by the Tudor and Stuart administrations in Ireland as a useful medium for proselytising the Catholic Irish (Barnard, 1993: 244–5). The first book printed in the Irish language was *Foirm na nUrruidealadh* in 1567, a translation of the Presbyterian Book of Common Order. The first book printed in Irish in Ireland was a plagiarism of this, but distinguished in its use of Gaelic rather than roman typescript. It was this font that was used for the Irish translation of the New Testament in 1602 and the Book of Common Prayer in 1608. While Catholics were proscribed from publishing in Ireland, schools of Irish Catholic learning emerged on the European continent. These produced various religious and devotional texts for consumption in Ireland (e.g. Ó Cuív, 1976; Millett, 1976; Silke, 1976; Ó Dushlaine, 1987) where Irish was the common language of sermons and pastoral care (O'Brien, 1989). It would not be until the eighteenth century that the Irish language would be dislocated from the Catholic Church.

The fate of the *flidh* is a critical element to understanding the social

trajectory of the Irish language in this period. To some extent the *filidh* were found to be useful by the English administration in the settlement of the plantations in Ulster and in Munster. They were used to act as advisers on landownership, law and land claims. For example:

[F]aoi mar a bhíothas toilteanach glacadh le Séamas fein, bhíothas toilteanach glacadh leis an ordú nua freisin agus bhí an t-aos léinn, mar chuid den uasaicme, lán toilteanach dul ar aghaidh leis an dearcadh sin ach iadsan a mhaireachtaint agus a theacht slán. Is sa chomhtheacs ginearálta sin amháin is feidir iliomad sampla aonair den próiseas ceanna a shuíomh agus a thuiscint.

(Ó Buachalla, 1983: 124)

[Trans: As James himself was accepted, the new order was also accepted and the literati, as a part of the aristocracy, were wholly willing to conform to that attitude but that their livelihood flourished. It is only in this general context that one is able to situate and to understand the numerous individual examples of this process.]

Kiberd (2000: 11, 47) notes that other newcomers, such as the Warner and Herbert families who had settled in Munster, were sometimes patrons of Irish language learning and culture. However, such respite was very short-lived as the Gaelic Irish world underwent further radical and more rapid change subsequent to the conclusion of the Elizabethan wars in Ireland and subsequent plantation of Ulster in particular (e.g. Dunne, 1980). As the seventeenth century progressed many of the features of traditional Gaelic Irish society were abandoned as the adjustments necessary for the modern Ireland were made (e.g. O’Riordan, 1990: 266–7). The *filidh* were rendered redundant, in particular, by the final replacement of Brehon customary law by English common law. As a result the cementing of secular power and the authentication of legitimate lordship no longer depended upon their poetic craft. Also, the abandonment of Ireland by the aristocratic leadership of Gaelic Irish society, a process mythologised as the ‘Flight of the Earls’, deprived the *filidh* that remained on the island of the main patrons of their learned cultural product. The disinherited *filidh*, such as Daibhi Ó Bruadair, soon conceded the socio-economic imperative that the English language in Ireland had become. In a poem written during the middle part of the seventeenth century he laments the situation:

Mairg atá gan Béarla binn,
Ar dteacht an iarla go hÉirinn;
Ar feadh mo shaoghail ar Chlár Chuinn
Dán ar Bhéarla dobhéaruinn.

[Woe to him who cannot simper English,
Since the Earl hath come across to Erin;

So long my life upon Conn's plain continues,
I'd barter all my poetry for English.]

(trans. Caerwyn Williams and Ford,
1992: 214)

The collapse of the social position of the *filidh* was accompanied by substantial linguistic change. The uniformity of Classical Early Modern Irish was eroded. Instead, geographically based dialects, approximating to the four historical provinces of Ireland, increasingly found expression in the literature that was both poetic and political. It is in this period that Modern Irish emerges. The sense of crisis which gripped Irish learned society, both Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Irish, was the stimulus for the great works of native historiography, in both Latin and Irish, of the first half of the seventeenth century. Much of the work was produced in Irish colleges established on continental Europe at Bordeaux, Douai, Paris, Lisbon, Louvain, Rome, Rouen, Salamanca and Seville. Some of the most important work was produced in Ireland, despite the privations of conquest and colonisation. For example, Geoffrey Keating compiled *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* between 1618 and 1634 in various parts of Ireland, drawing upon manuscript sources while they were still to hand. The initiative to compile *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* (Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland), popularly known as the 'Annals of the Four Masters', originated in Louvain, but ultimately they were written in a Franciscan friary in Co. Donegal by Míchéal Ó Cléirigh between 1632 and 1636 with the help of scholars from secular learned families, in particular Cúchoigríche Ó Cléirigh, Fearfeasa Ó Maoilchonaire and Cúchoigríche Ó Duibheannáin. What these and other works of this Gaelic historiography have in common is that they were designed to counter an English historiography which characterised Ireland as an uncivilised country. Keating's synthetic, narrative history of Ireland had the express aim of illustrating how the Gaelic Irish and the Anglo-Irish, to whom he belonged, had become the Catholic Irish nation which was now confronted by a Protestant and English conquest.

The successive plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are very significant in shaping the geographical patterning of the Irish language in this period. This process was piecemeal in its implementation but comprehensive in its impact upon the Irish language. The first phase comprised the plantations of Leix and Offaly under Queen Mary (1553–1558) through which the territory under the direct administration of the English Crown in the vicinity of Dublin, known as the Pale, was extended. A second phase occurred in Munster and was subsequent to the rebellion of the Earl of Desmond from 1579–1580. By 1592 around 3,000 settlers had established themselves in Munster. It was largely broken by the Nine Years War but re-established in 1601, and its population grew steadily during the seventeenth century. Around 22,000 settlers of largely English origin are considered to have established themselves in Munster by 1641.

The plantation of Ulster was similar to that of Munster in that it followed the conclusion of a military campaign in the favour of the English Crown. In this case it was at the expense of various Gaelic Irish dynasties of the northern part of Ireland. From 1610 the plantation of Ulster saw the arrival of substantial numbers of English and Scots settlers to the region. By around 1630 some 6,500 had established themselves and the ethnic geography was set: the English largely on the best land and largest holdings, the Scottish of lesser-quality land and more modest holdings and the Irish on marginal land. In the cases of both Munster and Ulster the principal urban sites were the largely exclusive domain of the 'New English'.

The Cromwellian military campaign of 1649–1650, and the resulting land settlement, further contributed to the modern geography of the Irish language. Subsequent to the 1652 Act for the settlement of Ireland, and in order to both raise money to pay for the costs of the campaign in Ireland and to punish the Irish, the English parliament determined that the counties of Carlow, Cork, Dublin and Kildare were to be set aside to the government and that ten other counties – Antrim, Armagh, Down, Laois, Limerick, Meath, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford and Westmeath – were to be set aside to numbers of the adventurers and soldiers that comprised Cromwell's army in Ireland. Besides having their land confiscated, those among the Irish found guilty of warring against Cromwell were also subjected to transportation to the Caribbean and to North America and to transplantation within Ireland. The main impact upon the Irish language was not from the arrival of English-speakers from Britain as this particular plantation did not see the widespread immigration of land-hungry settlers that characterised the Munster and Ulster plantations; rather, its primary impact upon the Irish language was as the result of the transplantation of many hundreds, perhaps some thousands, of native Irish from Ulster, and to a lesser extent from elsewhere, to Connacht. The Irish language as spoken in parts of Connacht still carries traces of this traumatic movement (Adams, 1970: 163; Stockman, 1965).

The geolinguistic reality of the early modern period in Ireland is complex (Figure 4.1). According to a number of commentators (Adams, 1958, 1964, 1967, 1970; Braidwood, 1969; Gregg, 1972; Ó Cuív, 1976, 1986; Ó Snodaigh, 1995; Moody, 1938; Robinson, 1989; Graham and Proudfoot, 1993) the distribution of the various languages spoken on the island following this period of conquest and colonisation can be outlined as follows. By the end of the seventeenth century two substantial regions of linguistic penetration of the Irish language cores can be discerned. The first, in the southern and south-eastern part of Ireland, extends from the Pale and Wexford in the east towards Limerick in the west and is flanked to the north by the Bog of Allen and the Slieve Bloom Mountains and to the south by the Nore river and the Slieveardagh Hills. In this zone the English language is the language of penetration. Outside of this core zone significant concentrations of English-speakers are noted, especially in the more important

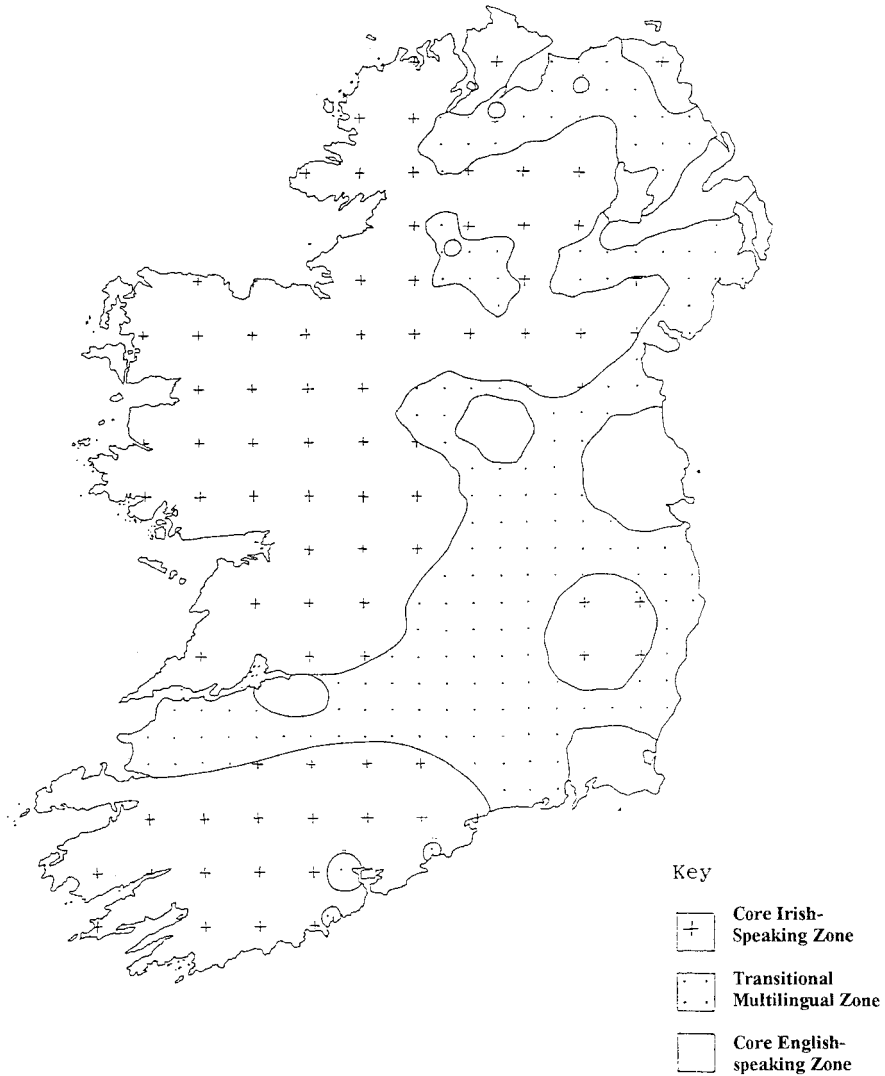


Figure 4.1 The ethnolinguistic situation in Ireland, c.1700.

urban centres such as Limerick, Cork, Kilkenny, Waterford, Youghal and Kinsale. Adjacent to this lies a transitional zone and it is likely that the Irish language remained the predominant language of everyday use for the greater body of the population in much of this zone. Beyond this Irish language was the unchallenged language of the overwhelming majority of the population. The second region of linguistic penetration is in the northern historical province of Ulster. The pattern here is much more complex than

in the first region, reflecting the more extensive settlement of this province by migrants from Britain. Here, several areas of penetration may be recognised. The first of these follows the course of the Lagan valley from modern-day Belfast to the south of Lough Neagh. The second comprises the area to the north-east of the lakes of Fermanagh. The third area stretches from south Antrim into the modern county of Londonderry. The linguistic composition of these areas of penetration is very complex as the linguistic identity of the incomers to this part of Ireland varied significantly. A number of linguistic groups are noted to have been amongst the settlers, including English-speakers, Scots Gaelic-speakers and speakers of Scots or Lallans. It is very possible that speakers of Scots or Lallans were predominant in the greater part of the various areas of linguistic penetration in Ulster. Modern linguistic studies (Adams, 1958, 1970) indicate that English-speakers were most numerous in the areas of central and western Ulster, as well as in the counties of Antrim and Down, but that they were dominant in the immediate vicinities of the major towns of the plantation of Ulster, namely Londonderry and Coleraine, and also along the Lagan valley running in a south-westerly direction from Belfast. Speakers of Scots Gaelic were only ever a small minority. They are considered to have been most numerous in eastern Ulster, the northern part of the county of Antrim in particular (Adams, 1958, 1970; Ó Snodaigh, 1995; Scott, n.d.).

The modern period

In this period no new peoples or languages were introduced to Ireland. Unlike the Tudor and Stuart plantations, the further confiscation and redistribution of land following the Williamite War of 1689–1691 did not result in an influx of new settlers to Ireland but rather it confirmed the Protestant ascendancy, a point reinforced by the introduction of the so-called ‘Penal Laws’ from 1695. From this point the place of the Irish language in society in Ireland was now bound to a modern process of nation-state building centred on the UK and in which Ireland played various roles. As yet, the Irish language remained the dominant popular vernacular, but this was the only social domain of Irish language hegemony for by now it had conceded all the formal and high-status domains to the English language. As the construction of the nation-state in the UK accelerated, so the relative positions of English and Irish were respectively further reinforced and undermined. The completion of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland between 1825 and 1841, for the purposes of more efficient taxation, is a useful example of the impact of state-sponsored activity on the Irish language for much of this period. The thorough Anglicisation of the Irish language place-names, considered an impediment to effective governance, was one of the results of this work. Thus, the Irish language was to become increasingly dislocated from the landscape as the intimate, historical relationship between the language, its communities and their

environments was made more distant by the bureaucratic mediation of the English map. Similar processes had the effect of further eroding the place of the Irish language at a popular level. Also, the fact that Catholicism was the touchstone of political identity equally served to reduce the social capital of the Irish language. Thus, it was during the eighteenth century that the Irish language, for the first time, began to lose substantial ground as the exclusive, natural and preferred language of hearth and home of the common-folk of the Gaelic Irish. Kiberd suggests that during this century Ireland became a land of vibrant bilingualism – English–Irish, in a diversity of forms (Kiberd, 1993: 4–5; 2000: 63–4); for example:

If Ó Súilleabháin could write the ballad ‘Rodney’s Glory’ celebrating an English naval victory, Ó Doirín could praise the ways of ‘The Independent Man’ in another English-language song. The immense demand for macaronic ballads suggests a cheerfully bilingual community, whose members admired fluency in both languages. Far from indicating a loss of purity in Gaelic tradition, the very fact that the framing language in most of these ballads is Irish indicates a culture still confident of its ability to hold its own.

(Kiberd, 2000: 63)

The bilingual *aisling* of Peadar Dubh Ó Dálaigh may be cited as another example of this welding of English and Irish, in this case using the political vocabulary of the English language while drawing from the poetic tradition in Irish:

Agus éirigh, ‘Ghrainne Mhaol
[So rise up, Granuaile]
And exterminate this heresy;
Tabhair lámh le Domhnall cléibh
[Join hands with the darling Daniel]
To gain Erin’s sons their liberty.
(Leerssen, 1986: 284–5)

However, it was English and not Irish that was increasingly the language of popular literacy (Ó Ciosáin, 1997: 154). By around 1800 the language of instruction in the hedge schools that were the inferior successors to the medieval bardic schools was English, and it is doubtful whether the Irish language survived as a mere subject (O’Brien, 1989: 163–4). The extent of bilingualism amongst the Gaelic Irish can be discerned from the falling use of interpreters in the expanding judicial system following the 1787 Act for paid magistracy. By 1814 such translation services were required in only ‘very few cases’ in Louth and Armagh (O’Brien, 1989: 168–9). According to O’Brien the key socio-economic class in the process of the acquisition of the English language was an emergent Catholic middle class:

The abandonment of spoken Irish by the same bourgeoisie in their rush to realise a Catholic ascendancy represented a subtle but significant victory for the foreigners. The opening of opportunity for upward mobility, the push towards self-improvement, the new insecurity of shorter leases, and all the various other factors which influenced the parents of lower-class children, were latent responses to a long-delayed conquest. It was no coincidence that this was the moment chosen by the ascendancy's intellectuals to seize the remains of a fading but still-living culture and direct it patronisingly into the role of an academic subject. Spoken Irish ceased to be of value in the late eighteenth century because it no longer had a context to which it could be related.

(O'Brien, 1989: 170)

However, the abandonment of Irish was a gradual affair, a matter of evolution rather than revolution, and that would persist through the nineteenth century as well.

The few inheritors of the bardic tradition, divorced from patronage and deprived of a secure place in a modernising and Anglicising society, reinvented themselves and their craft. Their services were in some demand within certain sections of society in Ireland. Many of their numbers congregated in Dublin where they contributed to the antiquarian activities of the Anglican elite and their Royal Irish Academy, established in 1785 (O'Brien, 1989: 163). According to Kiberd (2000: 56), many poets followed the retreat of the Irish-speaking society to the geographical margins of Ireland where their craft still found a meaningful context for its performance. Its points of reference were much altered and this is reflected in the form and content of their artistic output. Of particular interest is the phenomenon of the *cúirt éigse* ('poetry court'). This comprised a meeting of poets, either in a public house or in the home of one of the poets, during which poems would be performed, manuscripts and books discussed and the Irish language taught. The *cúirt éigse* was a mock-legal affair. Members would be summoned to *cúirt* by *barántas* ('warrant') issued by the 'judge' or 'high sheriff' responsible for proceedings. While the *cúirt éigse* may be regarded as a sophisticated parody of the English legal system in Ireland at that time it also serves to underscore the loss of the legalistic authority that poetry and its practitioners once exercised over the most powerful members of Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Irish society (Kiberd, 2000: 49–53). Thus, the balance between self-mockery and self-righteousness in the *cúirt éigse* is a delicate one. It is in this context that the audience for poetry in the Irish language may well have been larger in the eighteenth century than it was in the sixteenth; but then, and in contrast to their modern inheritors, the craft of the medieval *filidh* was exclusive and elitist by their own design. It is ironic that at the time when their poetry had its most extensive audience, its most characteristic form, the *caoineadh*

(‘lament’/‘dirge’), defined a Gaelic Irish society in ‘terminal decline’ (Kiberd, 2000: 41). The other poetic form typical of the eighteenth century was the *aisling* (‘dream’/‘vision’). The content of this form of poetry was very political and there was one consistent theme – the return of a Catholic king of the royal house of Stuart and the restoration of Gaelic aristocratic society. However, while both forms appealed to the disenfranchised Catholic society the imaginative sources for the meaningful political action of this period related to other cultural imaginings.

As the self-assurance of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy increased during the eighteenth century they sought a more authentic cultural attachment to Ireland and a more autonomous political authority with regard to its governance. On a cultural level this took the form of an antiquarian pursuit of the meaning of Ireland (Foster, 1988: 167–286). Interest was particularly keen in the history and archaeology of the island, native musical traditions and the Irish language, and their activities culminated in the establishment of the Royal Irish Academy in 1785. However, this interest in the Irish language was wholly based upon the understanding that it was a dead language (O’Brien, 1989: 163). For the antiquarian the Irish language was only of value as a signifier of the past. This interrogation of the identity of Ireland was a quest for the meaning of, relatively speaking, newcomer identities in the Irish context. This process whereby the Anglo-Irish sought to reconstruct their identity with reference to a more authentic cultural relationship with Ireland found its political expression in relation to the Irish parliament. The rhetoric of representative government of the ‘Glorious Revolution’ of 1688 in England, the military defeat of Catholic power in Ireland that was the result of the Williamite War of 1689–1691, and the prolonged and increasingly expensive nature of the warfare between England and France in this period meant that Irish parliamentarians were in a position both of considerable expectation and of political leverage throughout much of the eighteenth century. The Anglo-Irish aristocracy and gentry who were represented in the Irish parliament defined themselves as the Irish nation in political terms. That political nation comprised the governing class and that class was Anglican in terms of faith, landed in terms of socio-economic class and English in terms of linguistic identity. The colonial nationalism to which they gave expression can be understood as the political rationalisation of the sense of place adopted by the Anglo-Irish necessary to their attempt to gain greater freedom of governance from the immediate authority of the English Crown and parliament and in accordance with their own narrowly conceived national interests. The actions of the radicals of the British colony in North America during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the creation of the Volunteering movement, a quasi-military organisation formed under the auspices of the Anglo-Irish for home defence and in response to the failure of the English Crown to afford the maintenance of a militia, created the momentum whereby this political programme

reached its zenith. This included, in 1782, the repeal of the Declaratory Act and the amendment of Poynings' Law, the result of which was the creation of a largely independent parliament for Ireland. However, the project of colonial nationalism was ultimately short lived. It came to a grinding halt in 1798 with the rebellion of the United Irishmen. This radical, republican movement was inspired by revolutionary America and France and included Catholic and Protestant non-conformists (largely Presbyterian) alike among its membership. As with the antiquarians of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, some members of the United Irishmen and their associates were involved in Irish language cultural activities, including the publication of the first Irish language magazine in 1795 (Ó Snodaigh, 1995: 61–5). However, the fulcrum of the Irish identity for this movement was an identification with place and class and not of language and, despite the recruitment of Catholic and Protestant to their republican cause, arriving at unifying and meaningful conceptions of the nation were particularly problematic for the United Irishmen (Foster, 1988: 259–70; Boyce, 1991: 127). The failure of the 1798 rebellion, and the subsequent full political unification of the Irish parliament with that of England through the Act of Union in 1801, coincides with a decline in antiquarian interest in the Irish language.

By the first half of the nineteenth century the Irish language had become almost entirely irrelevant to the key domains of Irish society. While the Irish language still survived as the first language of the majority of hearths in the greater part of rural Ireland, especially so in the west and south-west, it does not seem to have been regarded as having any instrumental value by either the secular or religious leadership of that Irish-speaking society. The opening of the Catholic seminary at Maynooth in 1796, a reflection of the gradual relaxation of some aspects of the Penal Laws, found no significant place for the Irish language on the curriculum (O'Brien, 1989: 164). Similarly, the campaigning of Daniel O'Connell, which would ultimately result in Catholic emancipation and the extension of the franchise to an emergent Catholic middle class, defined the English language as the appropriate language for political mobilisation – and that despite the fact that O'Connell was a native speaker of Irish (O'Brien, 1989: 164; Ó Cuív, 1986: 381; Nowlan and Connell, 1985). The Young Ireland group of Irish nationalists that was active in the period 1842–1848, towards the end of the career of O'Connell, made an ecumenical appeal, which was strong on aspiration but weak on application, for the revival of the Irish language as a necessary feature of an independent Ireland. However, the fact that the basis of the appeal was 'revival' indicates the extent of the decline of the Irish language to that point. Despite Young Ireland the language was not significant to Irish political identity at that point (Belchem, 1995: 108). In fact, it was precisely at that moment that the Great Famine of 1845–1849 was to cause the substantial erosion of the Irish language in its last meaningful domain as the natural and preferred

language at the hearths of the potato-dependent peasants of Munster and Connacht.

The Great Famine undermined the vitality of the Irish language through the death and emigration of Irish-speakers. It also confirmed a relationship between the Irish language and poverty, in all its meanings. The English language was a fateful necessity for progress in Ireland and in all likely destinations of emigration. The Irish diaspora of the nineteenth century is significant when considered axially. That is to say, it was not merely the loss of Irish people and Irish-speakers from Ireland to other various parts of the globe that was of significance to the Irish language; rather, it was through their subsequent relationship to Ireland that the Irish diaspora continued to shape the fate of the Irish language in Ireland. The creation of the nationalist group known as ‘the Fenians’ by the Irish diaspora in the United States of America in 1858 is a case in point. Their relationship to the Irish language is reflected in the popular literature associated with Fenianism, including the numerous ballads published in journals such as *The Irishman* and *The Irish People*. The literary output of Charles Joseph Kickham is especially illuminating on the increasingly axial nature of Irish identity in this period. His novels communicated a nostalgic and rural version of the Irish past that proved most popular with Irish emigrants in America and Britain. Moreover, several of his works feature sections set in America. Both *Sally Cavanagh* and *For the Old Land* take the American Civil War as an important part of events. Thus, Irish identity was being defined both in and outside of Ireland. That the language of literary Fenianism was English underlines the Anglicising effect of this axiality. Evidence for the Anglicising influence of the nineteenth-century diaspora can be gleaned from the letters of many of those who made the journey to North America, for example:

Evidence of the utilitarian value of English is also contained in numerous letters sent from the United States by established migrants. Thus Seán Ó Dúbhda, a respondent to the Irish Folklore Commission’s emigration questionnaire, states that the American letter was instrumental in the anglicization of Ireland during the nineteenth century. He recalls his father telling him that ‘nearly every letter’ urged parents to teach their children English and to prolong the amount of time they spent at school in order to enhance their command of spoken and written English. He cites the following advice given in family correspondence: ‘I gcuntas Dé múin Béarla do na leanbháin is ná bídis dall ar nós na n-asal a teacht anseo mac. [For God’s sake teach the children English and don’t be blind like the asses who have come out here.]

(Corrigan, 1992: 150–1)

Such ‘American letters’ were almost always written in the English language, examples in Irish are something of a rarity.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the contraction of Irish as a spoken language could be traced using data from the national census. Information on the language was first enumerated in 1851. For contemporaries who possessed a sympathetic interest in the language this functioned as a crude barometer of the vitality of the Irish language, and as the nineteenth century drew to a close it was clear that if the statistical trend described by the census data was an accurate reflection of the social reality of the Irish language then it would cease to exist as a spoken language on the island of Ireland within the first generation of the twentieth century. For example, the data from the census of 1891 showed that a command of the Irish language was claimed for less than 4 per cent of children under the age of 10. Also, gross figures for the total number and proportion of Irish-speakers between 1851 and 1891 show a fall from 1,524,286 (23.3 per cent) in 1851 to 680,174 (14.5 per cent) in 1891. According to the same source the numbers of monoglot Irish-speakers collapsed in this period from 319,602 (4.9 per cent) to 38,121 (0.8 per cent). These data partly stimulated the remarkable period of activity in the area of the Irish language that defined *fin de siècle* Ireland.

The identification with the Irish language of this period is also related to the restructuring of Irish society as a result of increasing industrialisation and urbanisation (Lee, 1973). The vision of a simplistic and pure society in the western, Gaelic parts of Ireland was of socio-psychological comfort to the Catholic and Protestant middle-class intelligentsia of whom the Gaelic League was initially composed (Foster, 1988: 455). During the crucial period from 1892 up until 1915 two visions of Irish society and contrasting places for the Irish language in it were crystallised. The Irish Literary Society (1892), with the aim of creating a new national Irish literature, was the vehicle for one vision. This view of Irish society saw Gaelic Irish literature and language as an inspirational source for an Irish literature in English, or rather in Hiberno-English. The most innovative exponent of Hiberno-English was J.M. Synge, who developed it as a dramatic linguistic form based upon the literal translation of Irish into English while accentuating the local dialectical forms of English as spoken by the common population of Ireland and their reflection of the syntax, grammar and vocabulary of the Irish language. This literary revival engaged the Anglo-Irish intelligentsia and the Gaelic Irish learned tradition while idealising the Irish peasantry and the rural west of Ireland. The text 'Celtic Twilight' by W.B. Yeats, the leading exponent of Anglo-Irish literature, is significant in that it underlines the fact that the role of the Irish language in this case was as a means of accessing the past. In contrast, the alternative view of Irish society as promulgated by the founders of the Gaelic League (Conradh na Gaeilge) in 1893 identified the Irish language and its revival as a spoken tongue as being central to the identity of Ireland. This vision for the language was captured by Douglas Hyde, first president of the Gaelic League, in his speech on 'The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland'

of 1892 which led to the foundation of the Gaelic League. One of the aims of this movement was to create a popular literature in the Irish language, and the success of *Séadna* (1910) by Father Peter O'Leary in attaining a wide and sustained readership suggests that progress towards this aim was made. The movement also proved successful in influencing public policy – for example, its submission to maintain the place of the Irish language on the curriculum for Intermediate Education to the Palles Commission of 1899 and its campaign of 1908–1909 to establish the Irish language as a compulsory subject for matriculation in the New University of Ireland. The Gaelic League was conceived of as a mass movement. By 1908 over 600 branches of the organisation had been established, recruiting strongly amongst the lower middle class and in the English-speaking urban centres. However, it is instructive to note that the organisation was not very visible in those parts of Ireland where the Irish language remained a community-based, spoken language. The Gaelic League was intended to be a non-political and religiously inclusive organisation, and it is the case that Protestants and Unionists were initially attracted to the movement. Of course, Hyde was from a Protestant background. It has been noted (McGimpsey, 1994) that Irish language slogans adorned some banners at the Ulster Unionist Convention of 1892, and that Queen Victoria was welcomed to Belfast by the Unionist city fathers with an Irish language banner, and also that an Orange Lodge, at one time, even paraded a banner that sported an Irish language motto. However, the vision of the Gaelic League became ever narrower in its conception of Irishness and increasingly nationalist in its politics. The publication of *The Philosophy of Irish-Ireland* by D.P. Moran in 1905 and the adoption of political independence for Ireland as one of the aims of the Gaelic League at the *Ard Fheis* (similar to 'Annual Conference' in this context) of 1915 are important milestones in these regards and as a result the Irish language became associated with a confessional definition of Irish ethnic identity and a nationalist definition of Irish political identity (e.g. Garvin, 1987: 78–106; Boyce, 1991: 242–3; 1988: 115–36).

Regardless of all this, the Irish language continued to decline as a spoken language. The geographical patterning of the language in the modern period shows the continuation of the gradual process of decline from the latter half of the eighteenth century until the close of the nineteenth century (e.g. Fitzgerald, 1984; Cullen, 1988) (Figures 4.2–4.4). The work of Fitzgerald on the census data of 1851, 1861 and 1881 indicates that the Irish language further contracted in the provinces of Ulster and Leinster, and that the language fell into disuse in many significant domains and underwent a considerable loss of status. Towards the last quarter of the eighteenth century the Irish language would appear to have fallen into disuse throughout much of Leinster; the English language, on the other hand, began to further penetrate Connacht and Munster via the mid-lands of Ireland and northwards of the Bog of Allen. This is a significant

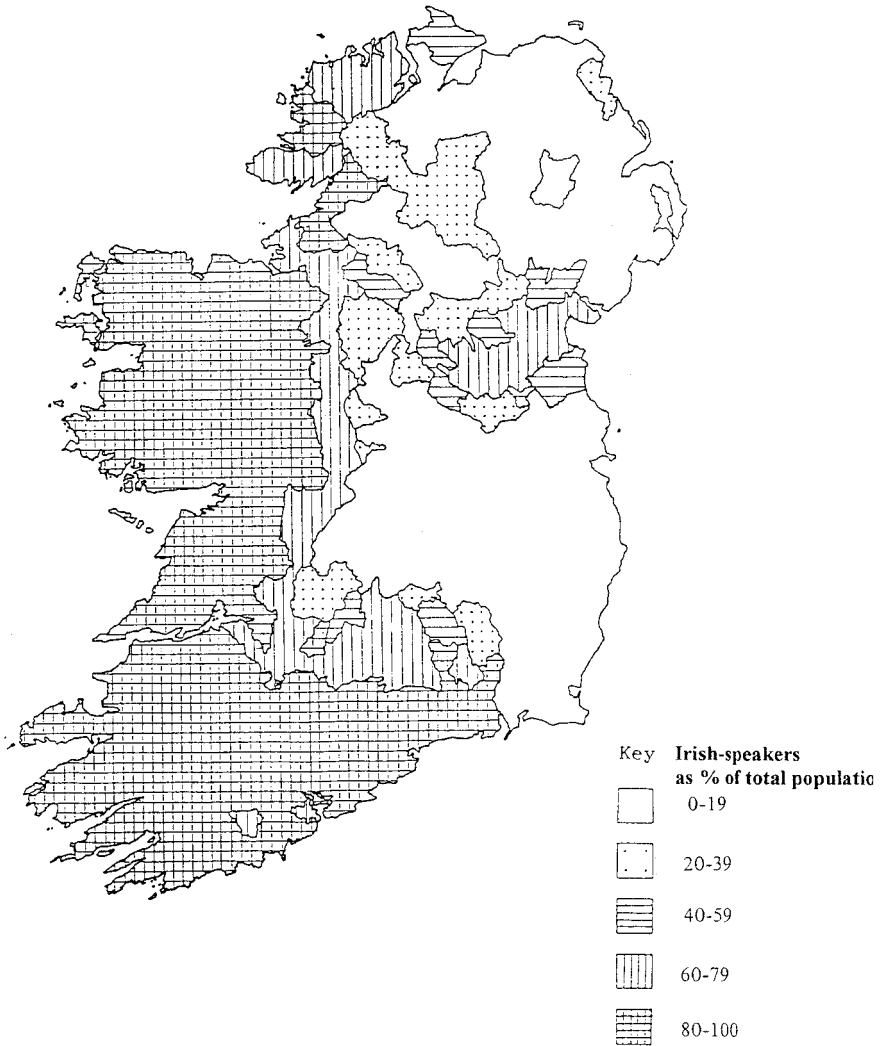


Figure 4.2 The Irish language in Ireland by barony, late eighteenth century (adapted from Fitzgerald, 1984).

development as it created a bridge between the core zones of Anglicisation in Leinster and Ulster. By the nineteenth century the Irish language in Ulster was becoming isolated in north Antrim, central Tyrone and in the area of south Monaghan. By the close of the nineteenth century the Irish language survives in Ulster in very small and linguistically isolated communities in central Tyrone and in the Glens of Antrim, while the English language has begun to make very significant inroads in much of

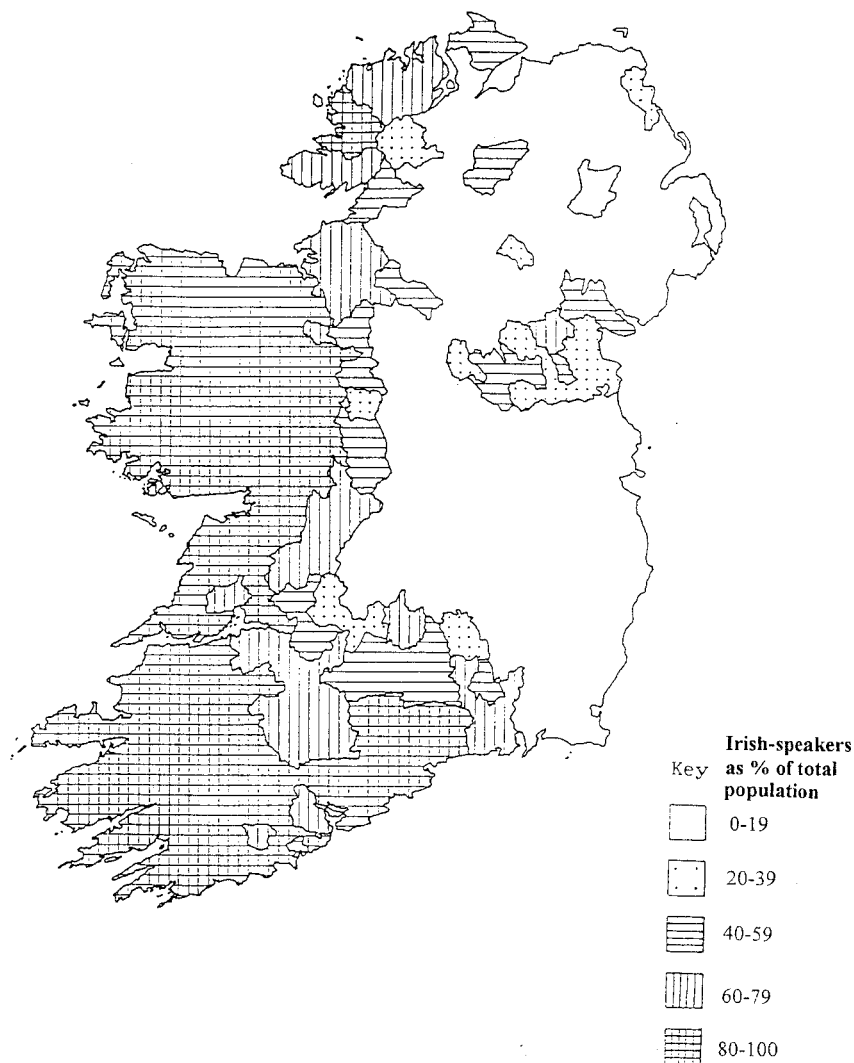


Figure 4.3 The Irish language in Ireland by barony, early nineteenth century (adapted from Fitzgerald, 1984).

Connacht as well as Munster. By this stage it is possible to discern the beginnings of the fragmentation of the Irish language into a number of smaller cores in these provinces. In Munster the language is retreating to two areas – one in the area of south-west Waterford and the other in the western peninsulas of Cork and Kerry – while the province of Connacht is linguistically divided north-south. In short, by the outset of the twentieth century the Irish language as a popular vernacular was confined to a series

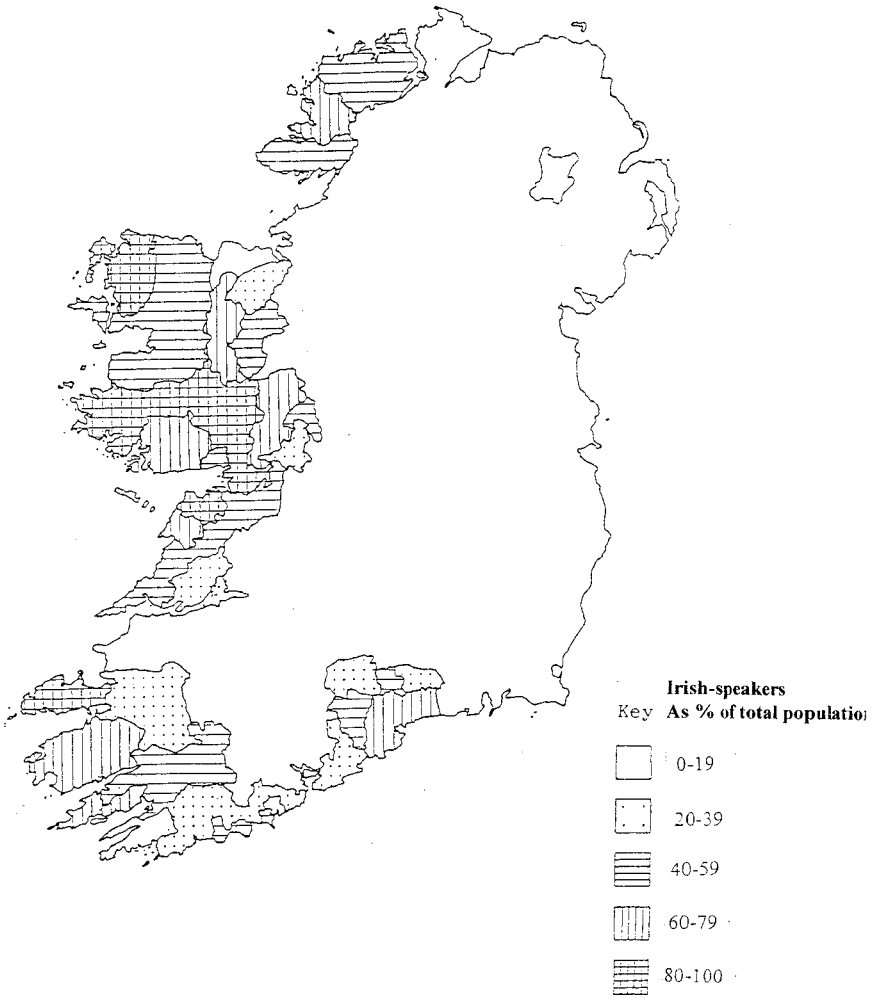


Figure 4.4 The Irish language in Ireland by barony, late nineteenth century (adapted from Fitzgerald, 1984).

of linguistically isolated cores located on the western coastlines and mountainous margins of the island.

Conclusions

The conquest and colonisation of Ireland during the early modern period is a watershed for the Irish language in Ireland. However, while the impact of warfare, dispossession and plantation was significant, the position of the Irish language was already being eroded by the extension of modes of

governance, administration and law which were driven by the English language. Acquiescence in this by the Gaelic Irish and the Anglo-Irish was instrumental to this revolution in governance. The impact upon the Irish language of the various processes associated with the further construction of the modern nation-state in the UK and the relationship of Ireland to such processes derive from this crucial period. From the outset of modernity the English language is viewed by both English-speaker and Irish-speaker alike as the language of social, economic and political emancipation. This perception was merely reinforced by subsequent events such as the introduction of National schools or the trauma of the Great Famine. The centrality of the Irish language to the late nineteenth-century discourse on the meaning of Irish identity initiates a revival of the language for which the fulcrum is an English-speaking, urban-dwelling and Catholic middle class. In this context the language was a definitive feature of an idealised landscape and people, but yet it continued to decline as a spoken language for as the twentieth century began the remnants of the Irish-speaking society were only to be found as a series of linguistically isolated, geographically marginalised and socially excluded communities which constituted less than 15 per cent of the total population of Ireland.

Part II

Contemporary geographies

5 The Republic of Ireland

Introduction

According to the statistical trend of the nineteenth century, in which the proportion of Irish-speakers in the Irish population as a whole declined from 23.3 per cent in 1851 to 13.3 per cent in 1901, the Irish language would cease to exist as a spoken language by the close of the twentieth century. That this has not happened is in itself remarkable. However, the extent to which this was the result of the Irish language policy and planning initiatives of Irish Free State and, subsequently, the Republic of Ireland requires consideration. It is necessary to unpack the cycle of institutionalisation (1922–1927), de-institutionalisation (1950 onwards) and re-institutionalisation (1975 onwards) identified by others (Ó Murchú and Ó Murchú, 1999; Ó Riagáin, 1988, 1992) with regard to the evolution of the relationships between the Irish language and the Irish nation-state in this period from 1922 up until the 1990s. It is also necessary to interrogate the assertion that state policies ‘have endured almost 80 per cent attitudinal success (surveys), 43 per cent competence success (Census, 1996), 10–12 per cent success in actual use on more than an occasional basis’ (Ó Murchú and Ó Murchú, 1999: 14). The position selected here is that the Irish language policy adopted by the founders of the state in 1922 was formulated entirely by the thinking of the revivalist movement and that it was based upon false premises with regard to the historical, geographical and social reality of the Irish language. It is shown that subsequent policy reviews did not result in very significant policy innovations. The policy shifts of the second half of the twentieth century had a cumulative effect upon Irish language policy, resulting in the de-institutionalisation of the language in some areas and, through the creation of semi-state agencies, its quasi-institutionalisation in other areas. Thus, by the close of the twentieth century the Irish language remained the national language and the first official language of the Irish nation-state; but for many it was a passive or relict feature of Irish national identity and merely the first official language *de jure*.

The institutionalisation of the Irish language to the nation-state, 1922–1950s

The aspirations of the state were directly informed by the views articulated by the Gaelic League on the revival of the Irish language. The key text is, of course, the 1892 address by Douglas Hyde on 'The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland' in which the Irish language is identified as the most critical element in the Irish national identity – largely unbroken in its historical continuity and vigorous in its capacity to wholly assimilate to its essential values newcomer identities to Ireland. He recognised that the Irish language, was in serious decline but argued that this was a very recent phenomenon. In 1889 he stated that the Irish language, 'fifty years ago, was spoken by nearly four million Irishmen' (Ó Cuív, 1996: 401). Two texts by another founder member of the Gaelic League, Eoin Mac Neill, entitled 'Why and How the Irish Language is to be Preserved' (1891) and 'A Plea and a Plan for the Extension of the Movement to Preserve the Gaelic Language in Ireland' (1893), proved to be particularly influential. However, Mac Neill's work was faulty. He overstated the numbers of Irish-speakers – he claimed 700,000; he overstated the territorial expanse of the Irish-speaking community – he claimed over one-third of the country; and he underestimated the extent and complexity of the challenge – it was presumed that the Irish language would spread out from the Irish-speaking heartlands in the west. In his earlier writings on the prospects for the revival of the Irish language Hyde suggests the difficulty of such a task. In a piece in the *Dublin University Review* in 1886 he exhorts that 'if we cannot spread it [the Irish language] (as I do not believe we very much can), we will at least prevent it from dying out and make sure that those who speak it now, will also transmit it unmodified to their descendants' (Daly, 1974: 64–8). Elsewhere he notes the utilitarian necessity of English, while positioning the Irish language as a counter to base materialism through its preservation in parts of Ireland:

In conclusion we may say this, that while our social and commercial relations make it a necessity for every man and woman and child in this kingdom to learn English sooner or later, reverence for our past history, regard for the memory of our ancestors, our national honour, and the fear of becoming materialized and loving our best and highest characteristic call upon us imperatively to assist the Irish speaking population at the present crisis and to establish for all time a bi-lingual population in those parts of Ireland where Irish is now spoken, from whom all those who in the distant future may wish to investigate the history or the antiquities of our nation, may draw as from a fountain that vernacular knowledge which for such purpose is indispensably necessary.

(Hyde quoted in Ó Conaire, 1986: 80)

By the time of the creation of the Irish Free State any sense of doubt, of limitation, or even of reality would appear to have been cast aside by those charged with formulating the policy of the new government on the matter of the revival of the Irish language. For example, according to Ó Tuathaigh (1990: 11) the body charged with the review of policy in this area, Coimisiún na Gaeltachta (Gaeltacht Commission), adopted a view of the Gaeltacht that conformed with the ideology of the revivalist movement rather than with actual social and economic conditions that prevailed in that part of Ireland:

An idealization of rural life, of 'traditional' lifestyles in the Gaeltacht, an implicitly anti-industrial bias; an extraordinarily static vision of Gaeltacht society, timelessly in tune with the elemental values of the Irish people; the repository of the linguistic elixir of Irish nationhood; a vision encapsulated in the phrase 'tobar fíor-ghlan na Gaeilge' – the uncontaminated well-spring of the national language, from which the rest of the country could continue to draw sustenance.

(Ó Tuathaigh, 1990: 11)

Thus, it was upon the premise that the decline of the Irish language had begun only very recently and that it was largely caused by the National school system (established 1831) and the Great Famine (1845–1849) (Ó Tuathaigh, 1972: 157–8; Brown, 1985: 50–1; Wall, 1969: 81–90) that the post-1922 state adopted a three-pronged approach aimed at the revival of the Irish language throughout Ireland (Ó Riagáin, 1988: 30–1). The constituent parts of this approach were as follows:

- to maintain the Irish language in those parts of Ireland where it continued to be the language of popular, everyday use, collectively known as the Gaeltacht;
- to restore the Irish language as the language of popular, everyday use in the rest of Ireland;
- to provide the infrastructure necessary for the realisation of the maintenance of the language in the Gaeltacht and the revival of the language in the rest of Ireland.

In 1926, under the auspices of the commission which was established to give consideration to Irish language policy, the areas that comprised the Gaeltacht were defined at district electoral division level according to linguistic criteria (i.e. areas in which at least 80 per cent of the resident population were returned as Irish-speakers according to the 1911 Census). Deliberately included were districts for which it was known that the Irish language was spoken but was not necessarily predominant (i.e. adjacent areas in which 25–79 per cent of the resident population were returned as Irish-speakers according to the 1911 Census and termed

‘Breac-Ghaeltacht’). The understanding was that the Gaeltacht proper (Fíor-Ghaeltacht) would expand and incorporate such districts as the Irish language gained ground in communities adjacent to those for which the Irish language was the common language of everyday use. However, it was the case that the population of the Gaeltacht around 1926 comprised less than 16 per cent of the total Irish population and was located in geographically isolated and economically marginal parts of the country (Figure 5.1). The prospects for its expansion were not good.

Consideration was given to the nature of education in the Gaeltacht.

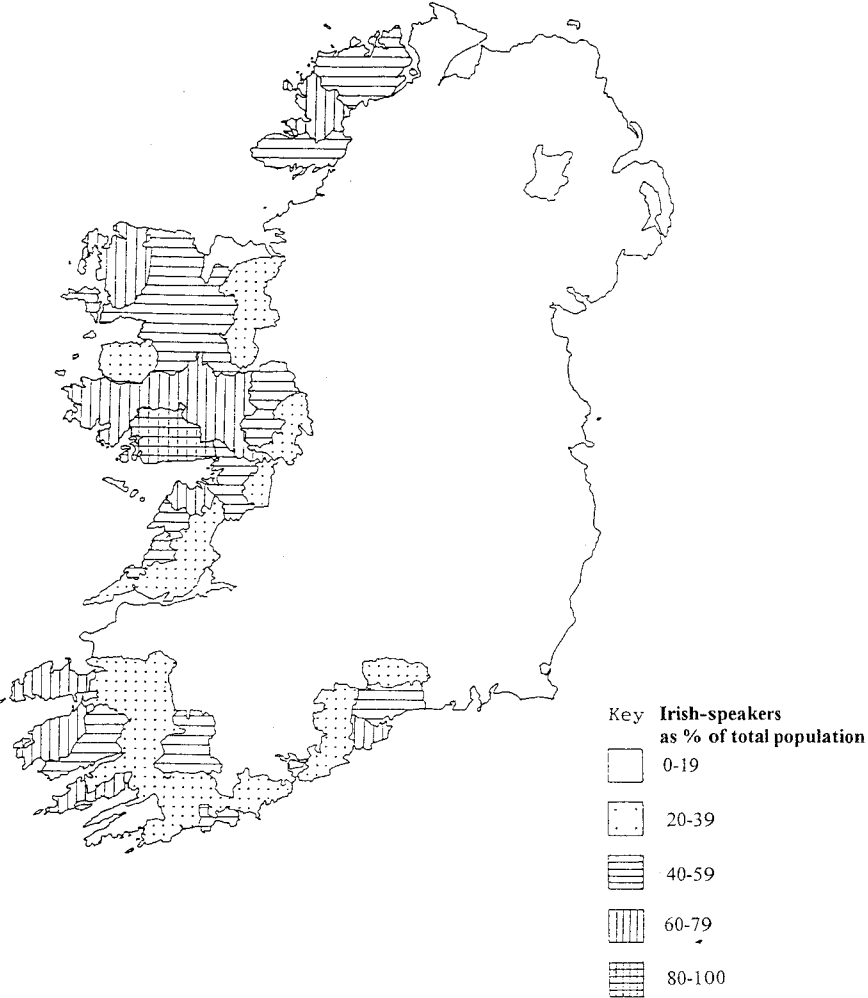


Figure 5.1 The Irish language in Ireland by barony, early twentieth century (adapted from Coimisiún na Gaeltachta, 1926).

The government determined that education in the Gaeltacht would be through Irish and that measures would be taken to ensure that sufficient teachers were trained for the purpose. While some question the pedagogical qualities of some of the teachers (Brown, 1985: 52), Irish was quickly established as the medium of instruction in National schools in the Gaeltacht. Consideration was given to the manner of the provision of the services of the various departments of the government and other agencies of the state in the Gaeltacht. In their report of 1926 the commission pointed out that no guidance or instructions had been issued to such departments and agencies on the delivery of services in accordance with the constitutional preference for Irish as the national language, and with regard to the dealings with the Irish-speaking population of the Gaeltacht in particular. The government took the view that a minister of state would ensure the necessary co-ordination of action in this regard (Johnson, 1997: 183), but there is very little evidence to suggest that much progress was subsequently made by the government in this area (Johnson, 1997). Finally, economic development shaped some of the deliberations of the commission. In their report of 1926 they offered a range of recommendations related to the development of the economic and physical infrastructure. These included a proposal to establish a body to monitor the implementation of policy in this area, but they were mostly rejected by the government (Johnson, 1997: 183). In the context of the absence of a coherent government policy on economic development in the Gaeltacht the collapse of the small farm as a sustainable economic unit was an especially severe blow to the economy of the Gaeltacht as it comprised, by some distance, the principal economic unit of the region. The 1940s would appear to have been a critical period in this economic downturn, reflected in historically high levels of emigration from the Gaeltacht, the closure of farms and the decline in male employment in agriculture (Ó Riagáin, 1992: 26–7). Thus, while the main thrust of government policy was to maintain the population of the Gaeltacht, by 1971 the actual population of the Gaeltacht was half that which it had been in 1911 (Ó Riagáin, 1992: 104).

Successive governments defended the selectivity of policy in relation to the Gaeltacht on the ground of cost-effectiveness (Ó Riagáin, 1992: 104). However, according to Johnson (1997: 175–6) ‘the treatment of *Gaeltacht* regions as homogeneous places and the direction of economic and regional policy from the political centre precluded any genuine encounter with these linguistic communities as modern and sustainable entities’. The most crucial reason for the policy failure was in the matter of attitude towards the Irish language. For example, many of the prominent campaigners for the Gaelic League, such as Hyde, were very aware of the fact that the language was considered by the native speakers to have little value. Hyde, in his address of 1892, contended: ‘We must arouse some spark of patriotic inspiration among the peasantry who still use the language, and put an end to the shameful state of feeling ... which makes young men and women

blush and hang their heads when overheard speaking their own language', for, as he noted, native speakers in all parts of Ireland at this time were encouraging their children to acquire the English language while at the same time abandoning Irish (Storey, 1988: 78–84). This attitude is reflected in the Irish language literature that flourished in the first decades of the twentieth century – most notably by Tomás Ó Criomhthain in works such as *An tOileánach* (1929, 'The Islandman') and Peig Sayers in *Peig* (1936) in which they asserted their view that they were the last of a kind. Irish language policy-makers became aware of the attitude during the review of the Gaeltacht in 1925 that '[t]hose who spoke it traditionally saw no avenue of advancement open to them or their children without English. Thus it came to be accepted that the language was destined to pass' (Ó Cadhain, [1963] 2002: 19). It is in this context that the totality of the linguistic shift by the first quarter of the twentieth century is explained, in part, by the acquiescence of Irish-speakers in the process (Edwards, 1984: 285).

The particular nature of the vision of the Irish language held by the chief exponents of the revivalist project was another part of this problem. As formulated by, for example, Daniel Corkery in *Hidden Ireland* (1924), or by Hyde, the Irish language was a means of accessing the past and the poverty of the Irish-speaking west was romanticised as a virtue, a characteristic of Gaelic purity:

The language of the western Gael is the language best suited to his surroundings. It corresponds best to his topography, his nomenclature and his organs of speech, and the use of it guarantees the remembrance of his own weird and beautiful traditions. Around the blazing bog fire of a winter's night Dermot O'Duibhne of the love spot, Finn with his coat of hairy skin, Conan the Thersites of the Fenians, the old blinded giant Esheen (Ossian), the speckled bull with the moveable horn, the enchanted cat of Rathcrogan, and all the other wild and poetic offspring of the bardic imagination pass in review before us. Every hill, every lios, every crag and gnarled tree and lonely valley has its own strange and graceful legend attached to it, the product of the Hibernian Celt in its truest and purest type, not to be improved upon by change, and of infinite worth in moulding the race type, of immeasurable value in forming its character.

(Hyde quoted in Daly, 1974: 64–8)

Concern over matters such as the mundane economics of the household were counter to the spirit of the language, as Hyde had witnessed in the parts of Mayo where Irish was being replaced by English. Thus he saw that

the halo or romance, the exquisite and dreamy film which hangs over the Mayo mountains has been blown away by the brutal blast of the

most realistic materialism, and people when they gather into one another's houses in the evening for a cailee can talk of nothing but the latest scandal or the price Tim Rooney got for his calf or the calving of Paddy Sweeney's cow.

(Hyde quoted in Daly, 1974: 64–8)

And according to Hyde this loss of Irish was not a matter of choice, for had the Irish-speakers any choice in the matter they would surely have chosen Irish. Rather, the loss of Irish and the acquisition of English was entirely a matter of recent compulsion. In this way the reality of the causes and extent of the language shift of previous centuries was denied and, as a result, despite the energy of the revivalist movement the numbers of Irish-speakers enumerated in the Gaeltacht declined by around 50,000 (29 per cent) in the period between 1911 and 1926, and by 1939 there were around 100,000 fewer native speakers of Irish than there were in 1922. For the native speakers of the Gaeltacht Irish was the language of poverty, illiteracy and marginalisation and English the language of education, emigration and employment. Despite government action to restore the Irish language as the medium of most schools within the Gaeltacht, at the same time, the failure of government to ensure the delivery of the services of its own departments in Irish or to develop economic policies pertinent to the Gaeltacht served to reinforce negative attitudes towards the Irish language within the Gaeltacht. The general failure of the policy to sustain the Irish-speaking community in the Gaeltacht during the initial period of the institutionalisation of the Irish language is measured by the re-zoning of the Gaeltacht in 1956 whereby its geographical extent was severely reduced.

Education was to be the mainstay of government policy in the rest of Ireland, where English was the predominant language – termed by some at the time as the Galltacht. While many of those who were most closely involved in the revivalist movement saw the need for the acquisition of the Irish language by adults, the dramatic decline of the Gaelic League in this period, during which numbers of branches shrank from 819 in 1922 to 139 in 1924 (Brown, 1985: 54), suggests that the energy that had provided the momentum in this area was greatly dissipated upon the establishment of the Irish Free State. As a result the greater burden of the acquisition of the Irish language as a second language was placed upon the educational system in general and on the National schools in particular. Government policy in this area was pursued with considerable rigour. In 1928 the Irish language was made a compulsory subject for the Intermediate Certificate and in 1934 became a compulsory subject for the Leaving Certificate. Also, by 1928 the historical records show that there were 1,240 schools in which Irish was the sole medium of instruction in infant classes, 3,570 in which the teaching medium was partially Irish, and only 373 where English was the sole medium of instruction (Brown, 1985: 52). Department of

Education figures show that the numbers of Irish-medium schools and schools in which the Irish language was a partial medium increased steadily in the period until 1940 but thereafter declined (Ó Riagáin, 1988: 31) (Table 5.1). This decline coincided with a loss of confidence amongst the teaching profession in Irish language policy in the education system. The matter was substantially introduced into the public arena by the publication of the ‘Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Use of Irish as a Teaching Medium’ by the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (INTO) in 1941 which claimed to demonstrate that instruction in Irish for those children from an English-speaking home was detrimental to their education. A second report, published in 1947, asserted that the manner in which policy in this area was being prosecuted was detrimental to the Irish language generally (Brown, 1985: 189–91). Thus, by the 1950s government policy on the Irish language in the area of education had not realised the thorough Gaelicisation of schools and was not producing new, competent speakers of the Irish language in large numbers; indeed, the evidence is much to the contrary. The aim of restoring the Irish language as the language of popular, everyday use in the rest of Ireland via the education system was not brought significantly closer in this period.

The third area of strategic concern to the policy of successive governments was the infrastructure necessary for the realisation of the maintenance of the language in the Gaeltacht and the revival of the language in the rest of Ireland. According to Ó Riagáin (1988: 31) this included a wide range of issues as follows:

- measures to define the constitutional and legal status of Irish;
- to standardise and modernise the language;
- directly or indirectly to promote publications in Irish;
- to provide for radio (and later television) services in Irish;
- to provide for public notices, street signs, and official documents and forms in Irish or bilingual formats;
- to establish procedures to recruit state servants with a good knowledge of Irish.

Table 5.1 Numbers of schools in which the Irish language is the medium, or part medium, of instruction

<i>Year</i>	<i>Irish-medium</i>	<i>Part Irish-medium</i>	<i>Total number of schools</i>
1930–31	228	–	5,378
1940–41	623	2,192	5,076
1950–51	523	1,955	4,897
1960–61	420	2,055	4,880
1970–71	194	49	4,117
1980–81	161	21	3,294

Source: adapted from Ó Riagáin, 1988: 31.

Implementation of policy on these issues in this period of initial institutionalisation was certainly not uniform. Individual initiatives resulting in the creation of entities such as the publishing house An Gúm (1926), the theatre An Taidhbhearc (1928) and the Irish Folklore Commission (1935), along with, for example, the adoption of a new spelling norm (1945, revised 1947) and the establishment of Bord Leabhar na Gaeilge (Irish Language Books Board) in 1952 no doubt were positive contributions to the vitality of the language. The most prominent step taken, upon the establishment of an Irish Free State in 1921, was elevation of the status of the Irish language by law. The new, constitutional position of the Irish language in society was enshrined in Article 4 of the 1922 Constitution of the Irish Free State. In this it was stated:

The National Language of the Irish Free State (Soarstát Éireann) is the Irish language, but the English language shall be equally recognised as an official language. Nothing in this Article shall prevent special provisions being made by the Parliament of the Irish Free State (otherwise called and herein generally referred to as the 'Oireachtas') for districts or areas in which only one language is in general use.

According to Ó Máille (1990) the reference to 'areas in which only one language is in general use' was intended as a provision for the anticipated, eventual absorption of Northern Ireland and designed to allay fears regarding 'bilingual fanaticism'. It could, of course, equally have been applied to those few parts of Ireland in which the Irish language remained the predominant language. A legalistic interpretation of the obligations placed upon the state by this constitutional commitment is found in the judgment of Chief Justice O'Kennedy in the case of *Ó Foghludha v. McClean* in 1934. He saw the Constitution as placing positive obligations on the state to maintain and promote the status of the Irish language as the national language, including through areas such as the educational system. His judgment also reveals the principles upon which the status of the language, as enshrined in the 1922 Constitution, was based:

One of the distinguishing marks of a nation, in the sense of a distinct people (though not a necessary or universal mark), is the possession of a common national language. This nation of ours possessed that distinguishing characteristic in the Irish language. It was the common speech of every Irishman down to comparatively recent times, when it yielded before immense pressure, compulsion in the schools, social, political and commercial forces. For some years before the Treaty of 1921, there was an active but a slow and difficult struggle to recover the lost ground. The language position at that date of the enactment of the Constitution is too fresh in our memories to need statement but

the importance of it here is for the interpretation of Art. 4. The declaration by the Constitution that the National language of the Soarstát is the Irish language does not mean that the Irish language is, or was at that historical moment, universally spoken by the people of the Soarstát, which would be untrue in fact, but it did mean that it is the historic distinctive speech of the Irish people, that it is to rank as such in the nation, and, by implication, that the State is bound to everything within its sphere of action (as for instance in State-provided education) to establish and maintain it in its status as the National language and to recognise it for all official purposes as the National language. There is no doubt in my mind but that the term 'National' in the Article is wider than, but includes, 'official', in which respect only the English language is accorded constitutional equality. None of the organs of the State, legislative, executive or judicial, may derogate from the pre-eminent status of the Irish language as the National language of the State without offending against the constitutional provisions of Art. 4. If the Rule of Court in question so offends then it is in my opinion unconstitutional and invalid.

(Ó Máille, 1990: 8)

The matter of the constitution of the Irish state was revisited by a Fianna Fáil government under the leadership of Éamon de Valera, a most prominent veteran of the uprising of Easter 1916. The revised constitution, *Bunreacht na hÉireann* 1937, introduced new provisions on the status of the Irish language within Article 8 as follows:

- 1 The Irish language as the national language is the first official language.
- 2 The English language is recognised as the second official language.
- 3 Provision may, however, be made by law for the exclusive use of either of the said languages for any one or more official purposes, either throughout the State or in any part thereof.

The term 'national language' was defined by de Valera in a manner that echoes the legalistic definition of O'Kennedy in relation to the 1922 Constitution:

It is the language that is most associated with this nation; the language that is in accordance with the traditions of our people. We are a separate people and our language was spoken until little over one hundred years ago generally by our people.

(Ó Máille, 1990: 4)

No clear explanation was offered for the third provision, whether it was intended as a concession to Northern Ireland or otherwise. However, the

practical implication was clear in that it allowed for the exclusive use of English or Irish by the state in any part of the state for any purpose irrespective of what the common language of general use in any given area, whether the English language or Irish.

The constitutional status of the Irish language in this period was aspirational rather than actual. Despite the recognition of Irish as the first official language by the Irish Free State in 1922, and as the national and first official language under the revised Constitution of 1937, it is difficult to find evidence that the constitutional obligations thus placed upon the state in relation to the delivery of its services were much implemented in practice. Other than certain cases regarding the use of the Irish language in relation to aspects of the legal system, processes and procedures, no significant and successful tests of the constitutional duties of the state with regard to the provision of services by the state in the Irish language or in the interests of the Irish language as the national and first official language were brought to bear until the late 1980s. The cases of *Helen Ó Murchú v. Registrar of Companies and the Minister for Industry and Commerce* (1988) and of *Antóin Delap v. The Minister of Justice, Ireland and the Attorney General* (1990) are the first of very few concrete and practical expressions of the principles relating to the constitutional obligations upon the state with regard to the Irish language, and they are confined to very narrowly defined domains regarding the translation of certain forms and documentation. The failure to more fully test the constitutional capacity of the Irish language begs the question, therefore, as to the actual nature of policy and its implementation with regard to the Irish language as the national language and first official language.

During the 1940s it became increasingly clear that the national aim of successive governments to maintain the Irish language in the Gaeltacht and to revive it as the popular vernacular in the rest of Ireland was not being achieved. The INTO reports of 1941 and 1947 were very significant in opening up a public debate on the matter. Irish language groups responded to the challenge by creating new organisations which sought urban and modern technological contexts for the language. This included the creation in 1943 of Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge, conceived as an umbrella organisation for voluntary and community groups engaged in the promotion of the Irish language, from which Gael-Linn, a modern media company, subsequently evolved (1953). The break with the Gaeltacht as the idealised essence of Irishness, linguistically wealthy and materially impoverished, is epitomised in literary form by *An Béal Bocht* (1941) by Myles na gCopaleen (Brian Ó Nualláin), a native speaker of Irish from Strabane in Co. Tyrone in Northern Ireland. As Brown notes:

This comprehensively satirized the literary exploitation of the western island, in a hilarious send-up of the island reminiscence, particularly,

in its translated form. The life evoked in this work is so awful, so miserable, so squalid, the narrator’s endless naive complaint so wearisome in its blend of querulousness and bombast that his oft repeated lament, ‘I do not think that my like will ever be there again!’ is likely to be greeted with general relief.

(Brown, 1985: 192–3)

The same break is expressed differently by Máirtín Ó Caidhin, a native of the Connemara Gaeltacht, in *Cré na Cille* published in 1948. The depiction of the Irish-speaking world here was not one which would have been familiar to ‘Pearse or his friends’ (Kiberd, 2000: 586). However, it took much longer for a coherent institutional response to the failure to sustain the Gaeltacht or to revive the Irish language more generally to emerge and it was not until the second half of the 1950s that the government set about reviewing policy.

The de-institutionalisation of the Irish language from the nation-state, 1950s–1970s

From the second half of the 1950s government policy in the Republic of Ireland underwent substantial modification and in some respects policy was reversed. In one area work continued largely uninterrupted – namely, the standardisation of Irish spelling and grammar. The completion of work towards establishing a standardised form of the Irish language was largely achieved in this period. Following on from the adoption of a new spelling norm in 1945, and its revision in 1947, a new morphological form was determined in 1953 and revised in 1958. In that year the publication of the English–Irish dictionary of Tomás de Bhaldraithe, and of *Gramadach na Gaeilge agus Litriú na Gaeilge: An Caighdeán Oifigiúil* (Irish Grammar and Orthography: Official Standard), marks the final development of the official and standard version of the Irish language – *An Caighdeán Oifigiúil*. The old-style script was phased out in favour of roman script in National schools in 1964 and in Secondary schools in 1970. Some examples from the standardisation in spelling illustrate the general thrust of the work in seeking clarity, consistency and simplicity (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Examples resulting from the standardisation in spelling

Earlier form	Revised modern spelling	English
áiteamhail	áitiúil	local
indiu	inniu	today
ochtmdhadh	ochtú	one-eighth
oidhche	oíche	night

Source: adapted from Ó Baoill, 1988: 113.

Despite some concerns most authoritative commentators would concur with Ó Baoill that

great strides have been made in organising Irish spelling and grammar into a vehicle of great potential in dealing with the modern world. It will be easier in the next 50 years or so to eliminate some or all of the discrepancies . . . and bring the grammar and spelling into line linguistically and semantically with what is left of a tradition cultivated by countless generations of Irish people over the last 2,000 years.

(Ó Baoill, 1988: 120)

According to Ó Tuathaigh (1990) the publication of *Irish Dialects and Irish-speaking Districts* in 1951 by Ó Cuív was seminal, not least as it was the first authoritative and public recognition that the Gaeltacht, as defined by the commission of 1926, was a fallacy. Subsequent to this the first indications, from the point of view of policy and planning, that a considerable change in direction was in the offing came in 1956 with the creation of the first governmental department dedicated to the Irish language in general and to the Gaeltacht in particular – Roinn na Gaeltachta. At the same time the boundaries of the Gaeltacht were dramatically redrawn through the ‘Gaeltacht Areas Order (1956)’ so as to better reflect the social reality of the Irish language rather than the aspirations of the nation-state builders of the 1920s (Figure 5.2). That set in place, the next step was the establishment of An Coimisiún um Athbheochan na Gaeilge (Commission on the Restoration of the Irish Language) in 1958 with the remit of reviewing Irish language policy and to making recommendations to the government. An Coimisiún um Athbheochan na Gaeilge published their report in 1963. In parallel to this, and under the ‘Gaeltacht Industries Act (1957)’, the government created an agency with particular responsibility for promoting economic development in the Gaeltacht namely Gaeltarra Éireann. This statutory board was initially engaged in the production and marketing of tweed, knitwear, embroidery and toys. The powers of Gaeltarra Éireann were extended in 1965 and, according to Commins (1988: 15), they were very active in the attraction of investment from outside of the Republic of Ireland. This represented a significant departure from previous government policy centred upon support for agricultural improvements and traditional economic activities. The modest industrialisation of parts of the Gaeltacht under the auspices of Gaeltarra Éireann saw the numbers employed in industry, as opposed to agriculture, rise to a peak of around 4,600 in 1978 (Commins, 1988: 15). However, Johnson (1997: 184–5) notes that this strategy was limited in a number of key ways. First of all, Gaeltarra Éireann was criticised for contributing to the Anglicisation of the Gaeltacht as many of the managers associated with the industrial ventures supported by them were non-Irish-speakers. Second, as the headquarters of the branch plants were

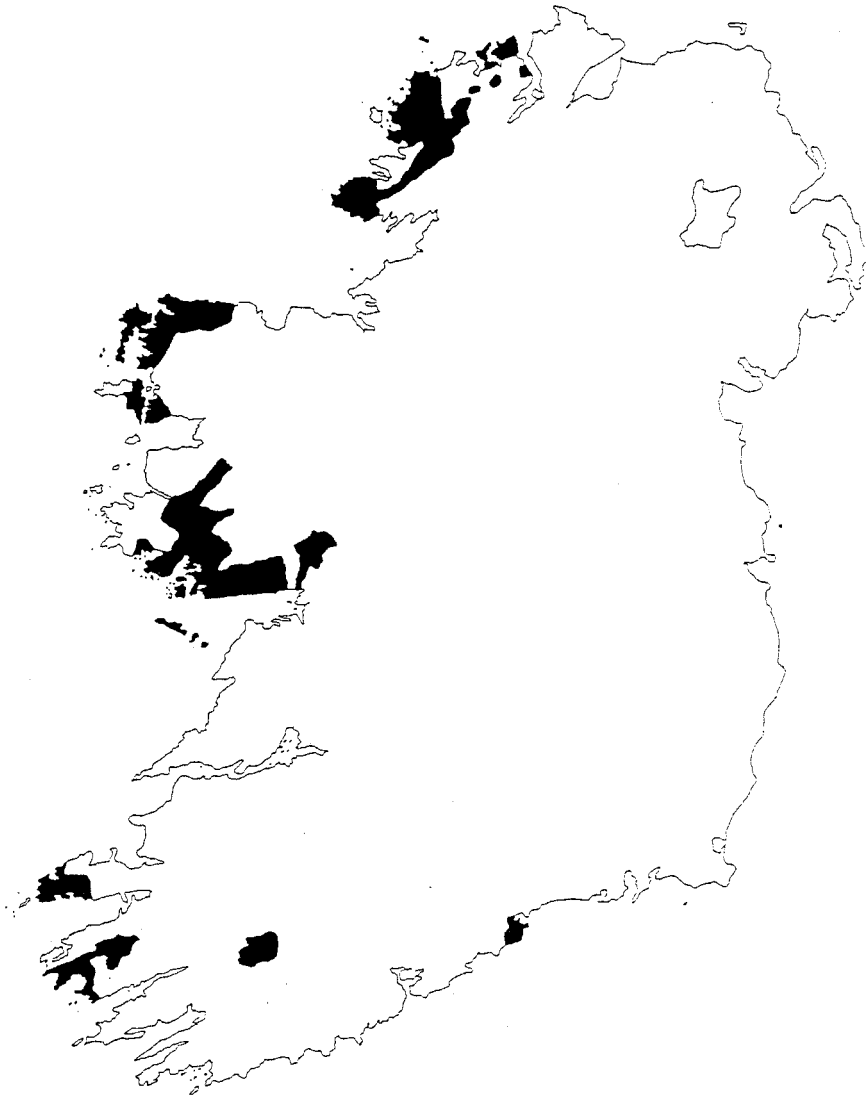


Figure 5.2 The Gaeltacht in 1961 (adapted from Ó Cuív, 1969).

located outside of Ireland there was very little local input into decision-making. Third, the centralised nature of the government policy and practices in Ireland meant that there was little engagement with local communities in the Gaeltacht. Finally, *Gaeltarra Éireann* was concerned with economic development, and the effect of their activities upon the Irish language was assumed to be positive. *Gaeltarra Éireann* did not

possess a language policy nor did they consider themselves to be engaged in language planning.

The final report of An Coimisiún um Athbheochan na Gaeilge was published in 1963 and the response of the government to its 288 recommendations was determined by January 1965. It is the case that the deliberations of the commission do not appear to have been informed by a body of objective, social scientific research (Ó Riagáin, 1988: 34). This may account for the over-concern with detail in some areas and the straightforward impracticality reflected in others. For example, on the matter of detail it was recommended that 'the news be read at a slightly slower speed' (Recommendation 237). On the matter of impracticality Recommendation 107 stands out: 'That a concentrated and systematic effort should be made to Gaelicise quickly a few towns and villages near the Gaeltacht, and to build on the foundations already established in order to turn Galway into an Irish-speaking city.' No indication was given as to how this might be achieved and, indeed, such an ambition flies in the face of the recent and actual historical experience of the Gaeltacht and contiguous areas. However, given the certain weaknesses of the report it is also the case that the attitude of the government was not wholly robust, including with regard to key areas such as public administration in which effective government action could have been reasonably undertaken. According to Ó Riagáin (1988: 34), 'The government responded to the commission's report in a somewhat bemused fashion. It accepted most of the recommendations but was clearly unconvinced about the feasibility or effectiveness of many.' A close examination of the 1965 document reveals extensive use of terms such as 'as far as practicable', 'adopted in principle', 'will be examined', 'consideration will be given to', 'will be encouraged', 'to be kept under review' – classic public-servant-speak which confounds any expectation that rhetoric will be translated into action. Some of these are rather telling; for example:

Recommendation 13: That all correspondence of State Departments and Offices with officials in the Gaeltacht should henceforth be in Irish.

43: Departments and Offices are being instructed to conduct all their correspondence with officials in the Gaeltacht in Irish *where possible* [my italics].

Recommendation 50: That local authorities should extend the use of written Irish in documents emanating from them. In Gaeltacht counties, an Irish version of all such documents should be made available and only the Irish version used in the Gaeltacht areas.

69: These recommendations are commended to the local authorities. The Ministers will *encourage* [my italics] the local authorities to implement them.

Recommendation 52: That, where a knowledge of Irish is necessary to fulfil the duties of the position (e.g. Chief Executive Officer, County, City, or Town Librarian), such knowledge should remain a necessary qualification as at present; that a knowledge of Irish should also be a necessary qualification in the future in the case of professional and other appointments associated with the schools, e.g., health services; that where suitably qualified applicants are not available, only temporary appointments be made and that the posts be re-advertised within one year.

71: This recommendation is accepted *in general* [my italics]; until it is possible, however, to fill a post on a permanent basis by an officer with competent Irish, an officer with a lower standard of Irish, or no Irish, will be appointed in order to carry on the service.

Recommendation 129: That the State shall ensure that all those holding public positions in the Gaeltacht, under either the central or local authority, will be able to transact their business with the local people with ease and confidence in Irish.

159: This recommendation is accepted, *subject to* [my italics] the general comments made above about Irish in public administration.

Recommendation 233: That a more positive bilingual approach should be adopted in the [radio and television] programmes as a whole. Since many magazine programmes are made up of a number of separate items, the inclusion of one or more items in Irish would be a practical step. A preliminary, or interval, talk in Irish should accompany musical programmes and a portion of the commentary should be in Irish in the case of sports programmes.

232: The Broadcasting Authority has instructed producers that no opportunity should be lost of using Irish in programmes, *where appropriate* [my italics].

In general terms, it is fair to conclude that the tone of the response of the government to the recommendations of the report was very cool indeed. Where there was clarity of purpose on Irish language policy it was negative in its impact upon the Irish language. The policy retreat has a number of significant markers – the withdrawal of the Irish language as a compulsory subject for Leaving Certificate (1973); accession to membership of the European Union (EU) under conditions whereby the Irish language became the only national and first official language of a nation-state member not to have the status of official working language of the EU (1973); the withdrawal of the Irish language as a compulsory subject for civil service entrance examinations (1974). The effect of the policy retreat

can be seen in the area of education in particular where, for example, the numbers of recognised Irish-medium secondary schools dropped from 80 in 1960 to 17 in 1975 (Ó Gliaáin, 1988: 90). Thus, the position of the Irish language was significantly eroded in the domains that had been identified as most critical to the revival of the language by the founders of the state – education, legal and constitutional status, and public administration. At this point the national aim was rearticulated as ‘to restore the Irish language as *a* [my italics] general medium of communication’ (An Coimisiún um Athbheochan na Gaeilge, 1965: 4) and not *the* general medium of communication. Thus, as Brown (1985: 272) puts it: ‘Bilingualism not linguistic exchange became the new aspiration’, and until that aim was realised the Irish language would continue to be the national language but would *de facto* cede official language status to English:

Irish must have primacy as the national language and every effort will be made to extend and intensify its use. Nevertheless, for a considerable time ahead, English will remain the language chiefly used outside the Gaeltacht for various purposes. To assume otherwise would be unrealistic and would detract from appreciation of the effort needed to achieve the national aim in regard to Irish.

It would also be unrealistic not to recognise that, because of our geographical position and the pattern of our economic and social relationships, a competent knowledge of English will be needed even in a predominantly Irish-speaking Ireland. English is of great value as an international language in communications, trade and tourism, and as a means of participation in world affairs. It provides access to the knowledge and culture of the English-speaking countries as well as to the large body of Irish literature written in English and to the prose, poetry, songs and speeches in which Irish national aspirations have to a large extent been expressed. Moreover, knowledge of English helps us to maintain our ties with the millions of people of Irish birth or descent living in English-speaking countries.

(An Coimisiún um Athbheochan na Gaeilge, 1965: 10–12)

English, therefore, was the language of modernity, material progress and international inclusiveness – the language of realism. The Irish language, on the other hand, belonged to the realm of the ideal: ‘idealism is and must remain the mainspring of the language policy’ (An Coimisiún um Athbheochan na Gaeilge, 1965: 12).

One of the more positive and practical steps taken in response to the report of An Coimisiún um Athbheochan na Gaeilge was the establishment of Comhairle na Gaeilge (Irish Language Council) in 1969. This was intended as a step in further policy development. In contrast to the approach of An Coimisiún um Athbheochan na Gaeilge, this body identified a number of strategic concerns, as follows:

- to prepare a long-term strategy with specific targets;
- to establish the necessary institutional framework;
- to improve the quality of available information.

A number of important initiatives were the product of Comhairle na Gaeilge (Ó Riagáin, 1988: 34–5). One was the creation of the Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research (CILAR) in 1970 and the commissioning of a national survey on the Irish language. Related to this was the establishment of Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann (The Linguistics Institute of Ireland) in 1972. This research activity represents the beginnings of a more scientific approach to Irish policy and planning and to understanding the place of the Irish language in Irish society more generally. Among the aims of the research were to identify attitudes towards the language and efforts to revive it and to measure the extent to which the public as a whole supported the various policy initiatives in this regard. According to Ó Riagáin (1988: 35) the reason for the focus on public attitudes was that it was ‘the general view at the time that the major constraint on policy development was the absence of sustained public support’. The research design also gave consideration to linguistic competence and language use. This survey was conducted in 1973, and the publication of the main findings in 1975, along with the creation of Bord na Gaeilge (Irish Language Board) as the body with statutory responsibility for the promotion and planning of the Irish language, represents the end of a period of considerable institutional introspection on the matter of Irish language policy.

Quasi-institutionalisation, 1970s–1990s

The response of the communities of the Gaeltacht to the long-drawn-out review of Irish language policy, as represented for example in *The Great Silence* (1965) by Seán de Fréine or in *An Ghaeilge Bheo* (Living Irish) – *Destined to Pass* (1963) by Máirtín Ó Cadhain, was one of bitter disappointment with successive governments from 1922 in their failure to bring about the revival of the Irish language throughout Ireland. The *angst* of the Gaeltacht found a number of outlets, including in 1966 a week-long hunger strike in Belfast and in Dublin by a small group of radicals styled ‘*Misneach*’ (Courage), and of which Ó Cadhain was a member. This was designed to coincide with the state-sponsored events commemorating Easter 1916. During the late 1960s the level of dissatisfaction with the state crystallised in the form of a Gaeltacht civil rights movement (Cearta Sibhialta na Gaeltachta). Initially, the main areas of concern were:

The lack of employment in Gaeltacht areas; the failure to provide adequate programmes in Irish on radio and television; and [the strong suspicion that] the language is gradually being ‘phased out’ in the training colleges, universities and even in secondary and primary schools.

(Nollaig Ó Gadhra, 1969; cited in Brown, 1985: 270)

The concerns of the Cearta Sibhialta na Gaeltachta became wider. According to Commins (1988: 17) their agenda included concern that the inaction of government in the sphere of public administration was causing the further Anglicisation of the Gaeltacht and that the actions of the government-sponsored Gaeltarra Éireann, while bringing employment, was also causing the further Anglicisation of the Gaeltacht. Therefore, the position of the movement was that economic and industrial development ought to be more structured so as to facilitate public and community-based participation in policy-formulation and decision-making processes, and that such development be made sensitive and responsive to the particular social, cultural and linguistic circumstances of the Gaeltacht.

This activity had a number of outcomes. One significant outcome was the creation of local, co-operative ventures within different Gaeltacht communities. The first co-operatives were created in 1967 in the Gaeltacht communities of west Kerry and west Mayo (Johnson, 1997: 185). Over twenty had been established by 1979 and were variously engaged in projects to develop agriculture and industry, to promote tourism, to improve infrastructure and to facilitate summer colleges for residential students of the Irish language. However, many of the co-operatives met with difficulties during the 1980s due to the economic downturn and also because of the limited local availability of managerial skills. A more profound difficulty related to the ambivalent relationship between the co-operatives and the state. According to Commins (1988: 18) the highly centralised nature of the state meant that it could not easily accommodate to its policies and practices local, community-based organisations, part of whose rationale was to challenge the historically dominant form of socio-economic development as applied to the Gaeltacht by the state. Equally, through becoming dependent on state grant-aid the co-operatives were increasingly perceived as quasi-state agencies and, thus, the autonomy and independence necessary to maintaining the sense of local ownership was compromised. Despite their limitations the co-operatives represent the first significant initiative that was characterised by a bottom-up approach to policy and planning in relation to the Gaeltacht. Also, in their engagement with broader social and economic concerns, the language was set in an appropriately wider context. The development of *Naíonraí*, Irish-medium pre-schools, on the initiative of local communities both within and outside of the Gaeltacht, is identified by May (2001: 139–40) as a significant response to the retreat by government on Irish language policy in the area of education. The first such unit was founded in 1968 and their numbers steadily increased, reaching a total of 185 in 1988. This, in turn, contributed to the reinvigoration of the Irish-medium sector outside of the Gaeltacht to the extent that 80 Irish-medium schools had come into existence by 1994.

A second outcome was the reconstitution of Gaeltarra Éireann as *Údarás na Gaeltachta* under the *Údarás na Gaeltachta Act* (1979). This

was largely in response to the dissatisfaction expressed by various representatives of the Gaeltacht that Gaeltarra Éireann did not provide for the democratic representation of the local Gaeltacht communities in its decision-making processes; that its powers were inadequate for the purposes of the effective socio-economic development of the Gaeltacht; and that its policies and practices were insufficiently sensitive to the language (Commins, 1988: 16). Thus, *Údarás na Gaeltachta* was established in 1980, with members elected by the Gaeltacht communities providing the majority of its board. However, its powers with regard to socio-economic development were little different to those possessed by Gaeltarra Éireann (Commins, 1988: 16–17). With regard to the Irish language, *Údarás na Gaeltachta* was charged with responsibility in this area as follows:

Section 8 (1) An *tÚdarás* shall encourage the preservation and extension of the use of the Irish language as the principal medium of communication in the Gaeltacht and shall ensure that Irish is used to the greatest extent possible in the performance by it and on behalf of its functions.

The policy subsequently developed by *Údarás na Gaeltachta* was to encourage all enterprises in the Gaeltacht which benefited from their support to adopt ‘language development plans’. According to the guidance of *Údarás na Gaeltachta* such plans were intended to be implemented in the workplace so as to enable enterprises to ‘increase and consolidate their use of Irish’. This, they recommended, could include the use of the Irish language in branding the corporate image of the company, the use of bilingual signage within the workplace, the use of the Irish language as a feature of the normal means of communication by the company, the adoption of a positive approach to the recruitment of staff with Irish language skills and the proactive provision of Irish-language training for staff. However, there is little evidence of the successful implementation of this policy in practice. Indeed, evidence that the impact of economic development under the auspices of *Údarás na Gaeltachta*, as with Gaeltarra Éireann, upon the vitality of the Irish language in the Gaeltacht was not wholly positive continued to accumulate. The skilled and managerial staff of such enterprises tended to be non-Irish-speaking, and, in many cases, Irish-speaking emigrants who had been attracted back to their Gaeltacht communities brought with them non-Irish-speaking spouses and children (Ó Cinneide *et al.*, 1985; Hindley, 1990). The fact that a separate department within *Údarás na Gaeltachta* was, and remains, responsible for this policy may well be a factor in the limited impact of language development plans.

A further product of the agitation of the Gaeltacht communities in this period was the creation of *Raidió na Gaeltachta* in 1972 within the established broadcasting authority – namely, *Radio Telefís Éireann* (RTÉ). The

social impact of Raidió na Gaeltachta upon the Gaeltacht communities has yet to be rigorously examined. But, in general terms, it is reasonable to suggest that the development was critical in a number of ways. It provided the opportunity of employment in a technologically driven, modern industry within the immediate locality of the various Gaeltacht communities. Also, it provided a means of transcending the geographical fragmentation of the Gaeltacht; through radio the different social experiences that define each particular Gaeltacht community could become more familiar across the Gaeltacht as a whole. While this has resulted in the smoothing out of some of the historical differences between the dialects of the Irish language, as spoken in the various Gaeltacht communities, the fact that the Irish language possesses its own broadcast medium contributes positively to the social capital of the language.

A final, substantial policy innovation was the foundation of Bord na Gaeilge (Irish Language Board) in 1978 under the Bord na Gaeilge Bill (1978). There were a number of reasons for this. According to Tovey (1988: 56) the creation of Bord na Gaeilge was partly in response to representations by different Irish language groups, including Comhairle na Gaeilge, that state policy and practices were much reduced in their effectiveness through being dispersed across a range of departments and agencies. Their argument was that the creation of an agency with a co-ordinating role would improve effectiveness in the implementation of Irish language policy. Tovey also notes that the results of the CILAR survey, published in 1975, showed the existence of positive attitudes towards language across Irish society in general and that this was a factor in government thinking. Bord na Gaeilge was charged with statutory responsibility for the promotion of the Irish language and in particular in 'extending its use by the public as a living language'. According to Tovey (1988: 57) the legislation left the specific powers, duties and aims of Bord na Gaeilge undefined and that it was intended that its role be consultative and advisory, for example: 'The main role envisaged for the agency seems to be that of keeping a watching brief on the activities of state organisations in general and on any proposed legislation which might affect the position of Irish, and making recommendations in relation to these' (Tovey, 1988: 58). During the 1980s Bord na Gaeilge defined its role in terms of the servicing, monitoring and co-ordinating of Irish language policy in the areas of education, public administration and community and voluntary sector organisations. In addition, it commissioned marketing and promotional campaigns and the commercial production, distribution and marketing of Irish language books. Following initial experimentation, Bord na Gaeilge retreated from an interventionist approach to the implementation of policy as a result of difficulties relating to projects such as *Sceimeanna Pobail* (Community Schemes) (Tovey, 1988: 61–3). The experience of Bord na Gaeilge in this case was that such activities required significant expenditure, garnered few short-term returns, and drew them

into 'conflictual relationships' (Tovey, 1988: 63). From the early 1980s Bord na Gaeilge determined upon a co-ordinating function at the top level of state. At the same time it adopted a very limited conception of bilingualism whereby the strategic goal was not the restoration of the Irish language but its survival as a language of choice for some in particular contexts. According to Bord na Gaeilge, the success of this strategy depended upon Irish society as a whole being broadly supportive of the Irish language and the state as the guarantor of the availability of services to Irish-speakers. Thus, for Bord na Gaeilge it was critical to build and to sustain a consensual partnership on Irish language policy in Irish society while recognising that most citizens were generally supportive but passive. In this way, therefore, the function identified for Bord na Gaeilge was to 'represent the state to the language movement' (Tovey, 1988: 66–7), and in this context the relationship between Irish-speakers and Irish language policy was that of consumer and product (Tovey, 1988: 64–5) – itself a reflection of the neo-liberal thinking on the function of the state in providing services to its citizens. In the context of the market small customer bases, other than that they are capital-rich, tend to be less well served than large customer bases. Given the passive nature of the support of Irish society in general for the Irish language it was inevitable that the symbolic capital of the Irish language as the national language would be difficult to translate into other forms of capital, other than that an influential player intervenes in the marketplace. Although Bord na Gaeilge decided against the interventionist approach at the community level and opted instead to seek to exercise influence at state level, its statutory functions limited it to consultative and advisory capacity. The members and chair of Bord na Gaeilge were all the nominees of the relevant minister of the government with responsibility for Irish language policy. On the other hand it was clear from the early 1980s that the government did not consider that the strategies, actions and practices adopted by Bord na Gaeilge to be government policy. For example, Dónal Ó Riagáin, former director of the Dublin-based office of the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages, noted:

When Bord na Gaeilge launched its three year action plan in 1984 it was interesting to note how the Gaeltacht Minister of the day, Pádraig Ó Tuathail TD, insisted, even at the official launch, that the document was a Bord na Gaeilge plan, not a government one.

(Ó Riagáin, 1991: 2)

As such, neither did Bord na Gaeilge enjoy the freedom and risks of independence from government nor did the Irish language have the benefit of being fully embedded in the institutions of the nation-state. At the same time, the Gaeltacht continued to contract throughout this period. A number of commentators (Hindley, 1990; Ó Tuathaigh, 1979) estimate that by the last quarter of the twentieth century there were probably as

few as 32,000 native speakers of Irish left in the Gaeltacht and that the proportion of the resident population of the Gaeltacht that is Irish-speaking is in itself steadily declining (Commins, 1988). Finally, the data from the 1996 Census show that less than 50 per cent of children aged 3–4 years and resident in the Gaeltacht were returned as Irish-speakers.

Conclusions

Confronted with the failure of the policy to restore the Irish language from the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922 up until the 1950s, government policy was redirected, beginning in the 1960s, towards a policy of the preservation of the Irish language within a bilingual society (e.g. Ó Murchú, 1970). This continued to be the case until the first half of the 1990s (e.g. Programme for a Partnership Government, 1993–1997). The form of bilingualism envisaged was that in which the Irish language, as the national language, enjoyed considerable status in public domains in particular, and that despite the reality of its socio-linguistic condition as the common language of everyday use of fewer than 5 per cent of the population of the state (Ó Murchú, 1992: 488). The justification for the high levels of state support for the language was based upon an observation that ‘the average person would seem to place considerable value on the symbolic role of the Irish language in ethnic identification and as a cultural value and of itself’ (CILAR, 1975: 29). Subsequent similar surveys (Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin, 1984, 1994) reported the continuity of this relationship; for example, it was noted in the early 1990s that ‘it [the Irish language] still fulfils an ideological and ethnic need for a majority in the population since English, as yet, has failed to be associated with the Irish national ethnos. On this fact, more than any other, its survival now depends’ (Ó Murchú, 1992: 489). However, it is also the case that support for the Irish language by non-Irish-speakers as a feature of their national identity is passive. In this sense the Irish language may be regarded as a relict feature of Irish national identity for the greater part of the Irish population. Data from the three national surveys on language, conducted in 1973, 1983 and 1993, show that these levels of support may be vulnerable and in decline, although Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin argue that the results in this regard are not in themselves statistically significant (1984: 6–7; 1994: 18). This sense of impasse derived from the failure to translate positive attitudes into positive linguistic behaviours, the contraction of the Gaeltacht and the ambivalent status of the Irish language within the institutions of state, is currently being challenged on a number of fronts. It is to this that we turn next.

6 Northern Ireland

Introduction

Our understanding of the Irish language in Northern Ireland (NI) is obscured, for the greater part, by a dearth of data. The parlous condition of the language sometime around the middle part of this century has been witnessed (Hindley, 1990: 150; Maguire, 1991: 10–11; O'Murcada, 1951: 1–3, 8), and its regeneration in the 1960s and subsequent growth has been of interest to various academic disciplines. A variety of indicators given attention in newspaper and magazine articles also give witness to the present resurgence of the Irish language community in the region (e.g. the *Belfast Telegraph*, 2 and 3 February 1993; the *Irish Times*, 11 and 12 April 1995). Up until very recently much of our understanding of the Irish language and society in NI was based largely on fieldwork carried out in a few particular locations in Belfast and its hinterland (Maguire, 1991; O'Reilly, 1999; Donnelly, 1994; McCoy, 1997). In this chapter the full range of data on the Irish language in NI is examined. Particular attention is paid to the data from the 1991 census in NI as this body of information is a significant point of reference for the most recent and comprehensive social surveys of Irish in NI (the Euromosaic survey 'Irish in Northern Ireland', <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>> and Mac Giolla Chríost, 2001). Also, in this chapter the relationship between the Irish language and identity in NI is shown to be more complex than a simple marriage between the language and Irish nationalist rhetoric. The analysis of the various data traces some striking and other more subtle inter-relationships between the language and religious and national identity within and across the ethnic groups in terms of knowledge and understanding of Irish and of attitudes towards the language. Other cross-cutting factors such as gender and socio-economic status are shown to play a part in shaping the place of the Irish language in the socio-political landscape in NI. Also, a clearer understanding of the nature of the Irish-speaking population in NI is derived from the results of the various surveys. This includes insights into the levels of ability in the range of language skills, attitudes towards the Irish language in relation to a number of important issues and actual use of the language in critical domains.

Some preliminary issues

Until 1991 the last census question on the Irish language in the six counties now known as NI was in 1911, the first question being in 1851. Between 1851 and 1911, therefore, there are significant data regarding the Irish-speaking community in the region. Much of these data have been analysed and mapped by Adams (1979) although, other than recording numbers and percentages of Irish-speakers, little analysis of the Irish-speaking community has been completed in relation to other socio-economic features such as age, sex, social class, and so on. In the 1911 Census 28,729 were enumerated as Irish-speakers in the six counties which were later to form the new state of NI (Adams, 1979). At the time significant Irish language communities were to be found in the area of Red Bay in north-east Ulster, in central Ulster to the west of Lough Neagh and in the southern reaches of the counties of Armagh and Down. Significant pockets of Irish-speakers were also to be found in southern and western Tyrone, within striking distance of the very substantial Gaeltacht of Donegal, and in south Fermanagh where they bordered on large Irish-speaking communities in the Irish Free State (now the Republic of Ireland). The remains of an Irish language community centred on the mountains of Mourne in County Down were also evident. The history of the Irish-speaking community in NI in the period between 1911 and 1991 may only be very partially illuminated. In the first place the census data for the turn of the century in Ireland would suggest that the nineteenth-century trend of the relentless contraction of the Irish-speaking community was beginning to be reversed. The total number of Irish-speakers jumped in 1911 to the figure 28,729 from a previous total in 1901 of 21,432 (Máté, 1997: 322) (Table 6.1). Interestingly, both the numbers and proportions of Irish-speakers increases among the younger age cohorts (under 29 years), while actual numbers and proportions of Irish-speakers fall markedly in older age groups. This is probably the result of the so-called Gaelic Revival characterised by, among others, the activity of the Gaelic League, Conradh na Gaeilge.

Table 6.1 Irish-speakers by age in the six northern counties of Ireland, 1901 and 1911

<i>Age</i>	<i>1901 (%)</i>	<i>1911 (%)</i>
<3	0.2	0.4
3–9	3.4	7.5
10–17	10.9	25.9
18–29	21.4	23.3
30–59	38.2	25.7
60+	25.8	17.2

Source: adapted from Máté, 1997.

Following the Government of Ireland Act 1920 and the eventual ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the Irish Free State (now Republic of Ireland) came into being, leaving the six counties of NI within the UK. From this point onwards, until 1991, no question on the Irish language was asked in any subsequent census in NI. Some sources suggest that in this period the Irish-speaking community collapsed to the point of extinction. The German academic, Wagner, notes the ruins of the Irish-speaking community on Rathlin Island during the 1950s (Wagner, 1958). A native Irish-speaker indicates the parlous condition of the Irish-speaking community of central Ulster during the same decade (Ó'Murcada, 1951). Caution must be exercised with regard to the veracity of these observations. The willingness of Irish-speakers to proclaim their ability in the language at that time was, most probably, heavily influenced by a political climate which was shaped by the Unionist-dominated government of NI and was prejudicial towards the language. The socio-economic stigmatisation of the Irish language in this period in NI was profound (Andrews, 1997).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the Irish language in NI was of increasing interest to government. In 1987 the first significant government publication on the subject appeared (Sweeny, 1987). In 1988 the Irish language was incorporated in the National Curriculum (Department of Education Northern Ireland [DOENI], 1989) and in 1991 questions on the Irish language were included in the census in NI (Department of Health and Social Services/Registrar-General Northern Ireland [DHSS/RGNI], 1993). Government policy towards the Irish language in NI, while undergoing some development, remains ill-defined (Pritchard, 1990; Committee on the Administration of Justice [CAJ], 1993). In this period central government set their policy in the context of culture: 'The government regards the language as an important strand in the complex cultural inheritance of Northern Ireland which should be valued as such by all sections of the community' (Central Community Relations Unit [CCRU], correspondence of 2 June 1997). They regarded this approach as open and non-political. The policy itself was described as follows: 'The Government's policy is to respond positively, where practical, to soundly based requests for assistance' (ibid.). The focal point for policy was, it would appear, the *Ultach* Trust, founded in 1989, a body whose main aim is 'to widen the appreciation of the Irish language and culture throughout the community in Northern Ireland' (ibid.). Through this trust the government made available monies for a variety of projects with an Irish language dimension, including schools. In 1995/96 the trust received some £426,000 in financial support out of total government expenditure of £2.9m on projects with an Irish language dimension.

Also in this period the government made it known that it was encouraged by increased Irish language programming in radio and television broadcasting under the auspices of the BBC and the Independent Broad-

casting Companies, and by the progress of negotiations to improve the reception of the output of Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ), the national broadcasting corporation in the Republic of Ireland, as well as the newly launched Irish medium television channel Telefís na Gaeilge (see also Mac Póilin and Andrews, n.d.: 5). The CCRU also noted that the government made available £1,161,000 to the Department of Education for Northern Ireland during 1995/96 for the funding of Irish-medium schools and curriculum materials. At that time other sources noted that the government had also begun to fund Irish medium education in a much more direct manner (*Lá*, 13 April 1995: 10–11). Support was also given in that year to the Irish language via the Londonderry Development Office and Making Belfast Work (£296,000), the Training and Employment Agency, Enterprise Ulster and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (£463,000). Other expenditure included a sum of £36,300 on the provision of education and translation facilities for prisoners, the provision of grants by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland for Irish language projects, including £494,000 available from the National Lottery funds. In other areas the 1949 legislation banning street names in Irish was repealed and members of the public who wrote to government departments in Irish would have their letters translated and be replied to in English.

During the 1990s policy at the level of local government varied significantly. Belfast City Council, for example, maintained a very negative attitude towards the language. Although, following the local government elections of 1997 and the failure of unionists to retain their majority in Belfast City Hall, Irish language groups in the city intended to exert pressure on the other political parties represented on the council to develop a more favourable policy with regards to the Irish language (*Lá*, 29 May 1997: 1). In other parts of the region Newry and Mourne District Council began employing an Irish language officer in this period in order to give support to Irish language activities (Newry and Mourne District Council, correspondence of 22 December 1994 and 16 February 1995). Derry City Council created a cultural sub-committee with, in part, the aim of seeking ways in which to develop policy on the Irish language (Minutes, Cultural Sub-Committee, Derry City Council, 28 February 1996, and Agenda, Cultural Sub-Committee, 18 April 1996).

On the whole, government policy on the language during that period has suffered criticism in several quarters for its *ad hoc* and reactive nature (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2000). Features of policy were contrasted with policy in relation to the Celtic languages in other parts of the UK, particularly the Welsh language in Wales and Scots Gaelic in Scotland (Mac Póilin, n.d.). Others drew attention to possibilities for improving the status of Irish language within the context of European frameworks (CAJ, 1993). This period in the history of the language in NI was brought to a dramatic close with the political settlement of 1998. The context in which the language is set in the document arising from the political agreement of Good

Friday 1998, entitled *The Agreement*, offers the prospect for transforming language policy in a number of key domains. But, before these possibilities are examined in detail it is essential to outline the nature of the Irish-speaking population in NI, the people for whom these transformations are most important.

A socio-demographic profile of the contemporary Irish-speaking population in NI

The 1991 Census records a total Irish-speaking population of 131,974, representing 8.8 per cent of the total resident population aged three and over. The distribution of the language may be illustrated by census region and local government district (LGD). Clearly the language enjoys a presence in all four census regions (Table 6.2). Irish-speakers are most strongly represented in the Southern and Western Regions, while actual numbers of Irish-speakers in the Eastern Region are highest with 31.7 per cent of all Irish-speakers residing there (Figures 6.1, 6.2). They are also quite strongly represented in the two largest urban centres in NI, the cities of Belfast and Londonderry (Table 6.3). Mapping the distribution of Irish-speakers at the level of census ward highlights some exceptional features of the distribution of Irish-speakers (Figure 6.3). Higher than expected levels of Irish-speakers may be noted in central Ulster to the south-west of Lough Neagh, an area centred on where the boundaries of the LGDs of Cookstown, Dungannon and Omagh meet and extending into Magherafelt

Table 6.2 Irish-speakers by census region, NI 1991

<i>Census region</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As % of total population of census region</i>	<i>As % of total Irish-speaking population</i>
Northern	22,236	5.9	16.8
Eastern	41,846	6.9	31.7
Southern	37,352	13.6	28.3
Western	30,540	12.4	23.1

Source: NI Census 1991.

Table 6.3 Irish-speakers by main urban centres, NI 1991

<i>Urban centre</i>	<i>Total population</i>	<i>As % of total population of NI</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As % of total Irish-speaking population of NI</i>
Belfast	266,384	17.7	27,430	20.8
Derry City	59,712	4.0	9,731	7.4
Total	326,096	21.7	37,161	28.2

Source: NI Census 1991.

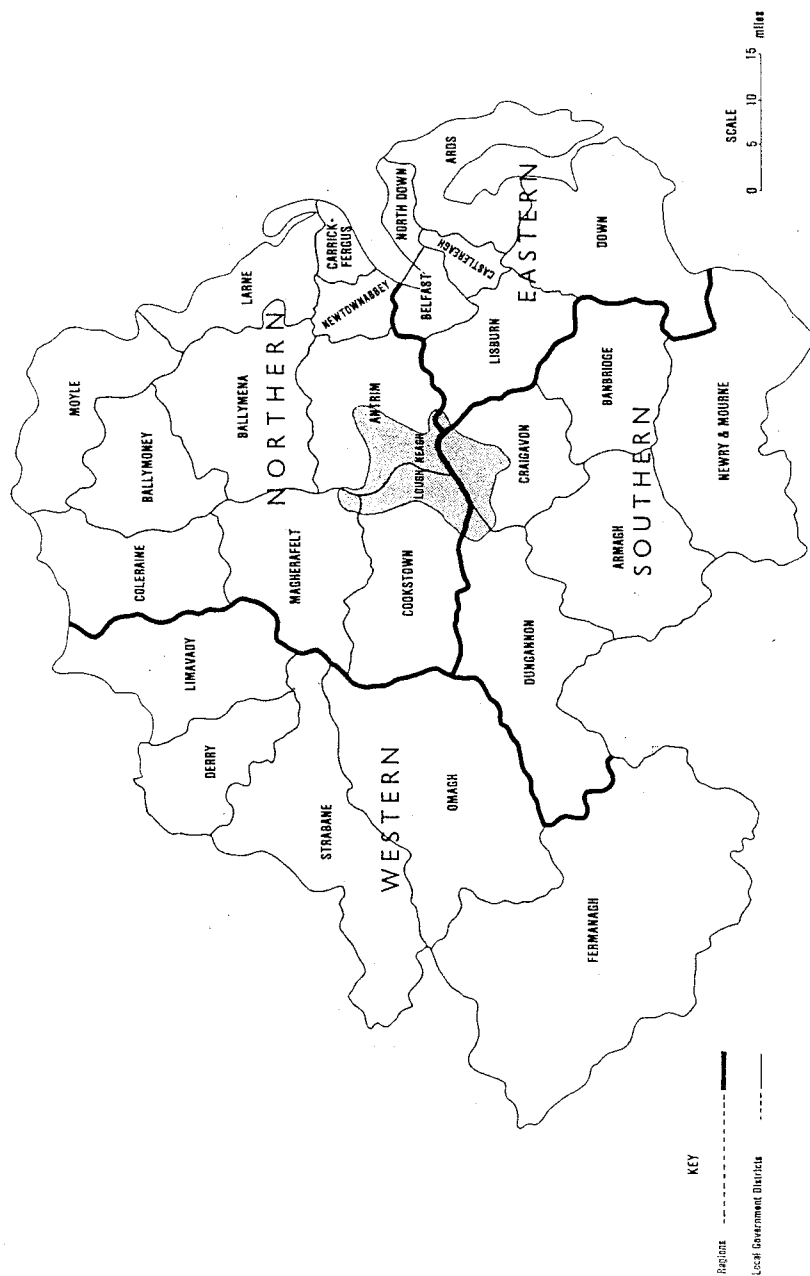
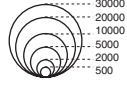


Figure 6.1 Northern Ireland: census regions and local government districts (adapted from HMSO Belfast, 1992).

Total number of Irish speakers



% of total LGD population



% of total Irish-speaking population

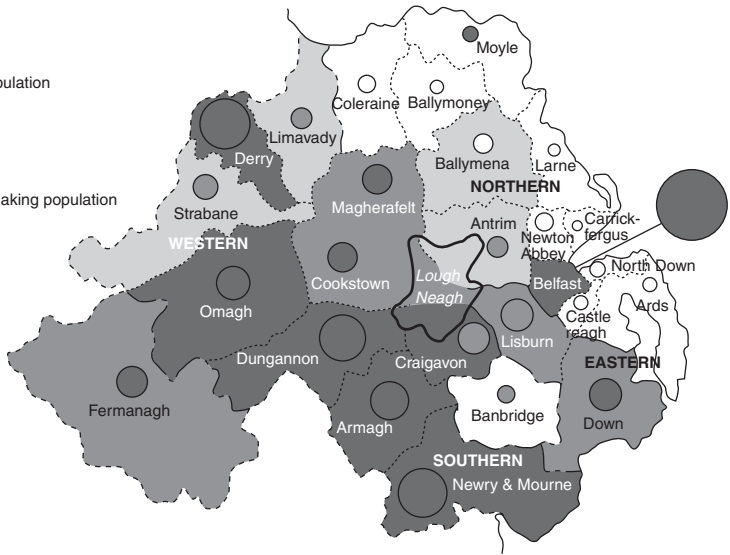
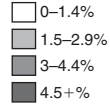


Figure 6.2 Irish-speakers in Northern Ireland by census region and local government district.

LGD. In Cookstown LGD two wards with relatively high proportions of Irish-speakers are Dunnamore (27.6 per cent) and Pomeroy (26.3 per cent). In Dungannon LGD the wards with high proportions of Irish-speakers are Altmore (26.4 per cent), Coalisland North (52.8 per cent), Coalisland South (45.4 per cent), Coalisland South and New Mills (34.2 per cent), Mullaghmore (30.4 per cent) and Washing Bay (62.5 per cent). The ward of Termon in Omagh LGD contains the highest proportion of Irish-speakers (44.4 per cent). Two wards in Magherafelt LGD stand out – namely, Lower Glenshane (29.9 per cent) and Swatragh (26.4 per cent). Higher than expected levels of Irish-speakers are also to be found in the western part of Newry and Mourne LGD. Wards with relatively high proportions of Irish-speakers are Camlough (30.1 per cent), Creggan (28.3 per cent) and Silver Bridge (30.4 per cent). The western parts of the cities of Belfast and of Londonderry (Derry LGD) also return high proportions of Irish-speakers. Belfast wards with a high proportion include Andersonstown (28.8 per cent), Falls Park (29.6 per cent), Glen Colin (27.7 per cent), Glen Road (30.3 per cent) and Upper Springfield (27.4 per cent). Wards in Derry LGD with similarly high proportions include Ballynashallog (27.6 per cent) and Strand (27.6 per cent).

According to the authors of the Euromosaic report *Irish in the North of Ireland* the distribution of Irish-speakers in NI as derived from the 1991

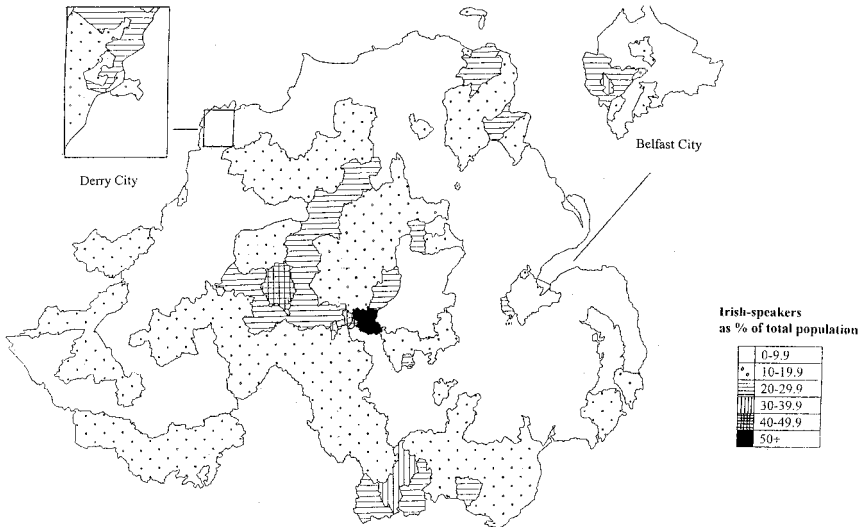


Figure 6.3 Irish-speakers in Northern Ireland by ward.

Census is related entirely to the distribution of Catholics in the region. It is stated in the report: 'Given that the two religious groups are not randomly dispersed within the region there are also geographical variations in the number of speakers that are evident' (*Irish in the North of Ireland*: <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>>, p. 3). Nic Craith and Shuttleworth contradict this assertion in a brief exploration of the data from the 1991 Census. They note that the distribution of those with a knowledge of Irish is not entirely related to the distribution of Catholics in the region. They point to the high density of Catholics (61.8 per cent) in Strabane but the relatively low level of those with a knowledge of the language (9.39 per cent), in contrast with the Belfast urban area where the proportion of those with a knowledge of Irish is much higher despite the fact the proportion of Catholics is much lower (Nic Craith and Shuttleworth, 1996). While refraining from a substantial analysis of the data, they suggest that the higher incidence of knowledge of the language in Belfast may be related to generally higher levels of politicisation in Belfast as opposed to other parts of NI and also, perhaps, to the greater concentration of Irish language activity which may be seen in Belfast. Such an analysis would not explain the concentrations of Irish-speakers noted in other parts of NI unless we are to translate the higher levels of politicisation noted for Belfast to those other parts as well. It is significant that in other parts of NI such as Crossmaglen census ward, an area which may be characterised in a fashion similar to west Belfast, the Irish-speaking population (24.1 per cent) is not much greater than that which would be expected from within the Catholic

community as a whole (approx. 21 per cent). Examples of similar cases can be found elsewhere in the region; for example; the levels of Irish-speakers are much lower in the wards of Creggan Central (18.1 per cent) and Creggan South (16.6 per cent) in the western half of the city of Londonderry where it could be said that the overwhelmingly nationalist community is highly politicised in a fashion similar to west Belfast. In other words, the geography of the Irish language in NI is not to be explained simply in terms of the distribution of the Catholic population nor in terms of the location of highly politicised nationalist communities. The presence of Irish-speakers in some parts of society and their relative scarcity in others must be explained with reference to a more diverse socio-political context.

Mapping of the data at census ward level (Figure 6.3) shows that there may be some evidence for very limited continuity between the Irish-speaking community, as recorded in 1911 and in 1991. For example, the age structure of Irish-speakers in Glendun census ward, Moyle LGD (Table 6.4) shows that over 17 per cent of Irish-speakers in that ward were of 65 years or over. The proportion in this age group within the Irish-speaking population across NI as whole is 6.8 per cent (Table 6.6). Glendun census ward, Moyle LGD is located within the Red Bay area of north-east Antrim which in 1911 contained a significant Irish-speaking community. Due to changes in the administrative units between the two censuses in 1911 and 1991 this apparent pattern should be treated with some caution. But it is none the less suggestive of the survival of some individuals from the Irish-speaking community recorded in 1911. These vestiges, which may be described as *relict Gaeltachtaí*, are remarkable in that they appear to confound well-received notions on the death of the Irish language during the middle part of this century (Maguire, 1987). During a semi-structured interview conducted as a part of the programme of fieldwork for the Mac Giolla Chríost survey an officer from the Ultach Trust stated that he had recently come across an individual from Rathlin Island (Irish-speaking population over 50 per cent in 1911, under 20 per cent in 1991) who professed some grasp of the language. It was ascertained that this individual had acquired Irish as his mother tongue but was only able to sustain conversation within certain limitations of vocabulary and topic of conversation.

Table 6.4 Irish-speakers by age in Glendun census ward, Moyle LGD, NI 1991

Age group	Number of Irish-speakers	As % of total age group	As % of total Irish-speaking population NI
3–14	25	11.2	12.4
15–24	51	26.4	25.4
25–44	42	16.0	20.9
45–64	48	23.0	23.9
65+	35	17.3	17.4

Source: NI Census 1991.

The figure in Glendun census ward is in contrast to the much younger profiles for the high concentrations of Irish-speakers found in some other parts of NI. The age profile of the Irish-speakers recorded in the 1991 Census indicates a general rejuvenation of the language. This rejuvenation is located in some areas in which an Irish-speaking population was recorded in 1911, including parts of central Ulster and southern Armagh, but not the area of Red Bay. It is also to be found in other parts of NI in which no significant Irish-speaking population whatsoever was recorded in 1911. This includes the urban centres of Belfast and Londonderry and the rural district around Coalisland on the south-western corner of Lough Neagh. Maguire used the term 'neo-Gaeltacht' to describe the Irish-speaking community of west Belfast (Maguire, 1987) whose growth during the 1980s she recounted more fully in 1991 (Maguire, 1991). This term could equally be applied to those other emergent Irish-speaking communities in NI whose presence the mapping of the data from the 1991 Census makes more salient. The process of rejuvenation is clear in these cases. The Irish-speaking population in the cluster of wards around Coalisland in Dungannon LGD contains a much lower proportion of Irish-speakers in the age group 65 years or over than does Glendun census ward. For example, in Coalisland South census ward 3.4 per cent of Irish-speakers are in the age group 65 years or over and 30.4 per cent are in the age group 3–14 years; indeed, 55 per cent of all Irish-speakers in this particular ward are to be found in the age range of 3–24 years old (Table 6.5). Some Irish-speaking populations in other wards, for example Falls Park, Belfast LGD, contain no speakers whatsoever in the older age groups.

On the whole the Irish-speaking population is young, with 48 per cent aged 24 or less (Table 6.6). A breakdown of the 3–14 age group (Table 6.7) would appear to indicate that while there are very many young Irish-speakers the actual number who acquire the language via parental transmission is limited and that the greater number acquire the language in school, particularly at secondary level. In Tables 6.8–6.14 the incidence of Irish-speakers is related to highest academic qualification, social class and economic activity. No attempt has been made to deduce spatial patterns.

Table 6.5 Irish-speakers by age in Coalisland South census ward, Dungannon LGD, NI 1991

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As % of total age group</i>	<i>As % of Irish-speaking population NI</i>
3–14	259	50.4	30.4
15–24	209	56.5	24.6
25–44	241	45.0	28.3
45–64	113	38.3	13.3
65+	29	18.6	3.4

Source: NI Census 1991.

Table 6.6 Irish-speakers by age, NI 1991

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As % of total population of age group</i>	<i>As % of total Irish-speaking population</i>
3–14	30,903	10.0	23.4
15–24	32,426	12.8	24.6
25–44	39,784	9.2	30.1
45–64	19,861	6.5	15.0
65+	9,000	4.5	6.8

Source: NI Census 1991.

Table 6.7 Irish-speakers by age 3–14, NI 1991

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As % of total age group</i>	<i>As % of total Irish-speaking population NI</i>
3–4	1,586	3.0	1.2
5–9	7,648	5.9	5.8
10–14	21,669	16.9	16.4

Source: NI Census 1991.

Table 6.8 Irish-speakers by highest academic qualification, NI 1991

<i>Level of qualification</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>	<i>Number of non-Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>
1	14,269	14.8	62,228	5.8
2	2,052	2.1	17,431	1.6
3	10,739	11.1	54,847	5.1
4	1,723	1.8	16,643	1.6
5	21,034	21.8	167,697	15.7
6	2,662	2.8	37,828	3.5
7	44,060	45.6	714,725	66.7

Source: NI Census 1991.

Table 6.9 Male Irish-speakers by highest academic qualification, NI 1991

<i>Level of qualification</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>	<i>Number of non-Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>
1	7,308	16.0	34,926	6.8
2	1,365	3.0	13,538	2.6
3	4,720	10.3	24,487	4.8
4	1,060	2.3	11,534	2.2
5	8,648	18.9	69,768	13.6
6	1,365	3.0	18,532	3.6
7	21,351	46.6	340,569	66.3

Source: NI Census 1991.

Table 6.10 Female Irish-speakers by highest academic qualification, NI 1991

<i>Level of qualification</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>	<i>Number of non-Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>
1	6,961	13.7	27,302	4.9
2	687	1.4	3,893	0.7
3	6,019	11.9	35,716	6.4
4	663	1.3	5,109	0.9
5	12,386	24.4	97,929	17.5
6	1,297	2.6	19,296	3.5
7	22,709	44.8	374,156	67.0

Source: NI Census 1991.

Tables 6.8–6.10 indicate that Irish-speakers tend to be over-represented in the higher levels of academic attainment and are particularly over-represented in level 1, the highest level of academic attainment. There is a notable blip at level 5, indicating qualifications at GCSE level and equivalent. There is no significant variation between the sexes, the Irish-speaking population conforms with NI as a whole in that males tend to predominate at both the very top and bottom ends of the scale and females to be slightly more heavily represented at level 3 (GCE A-level and equivalent) and also at level 5.

An exploration of the incidence of Irish-speaking by social class reveals some interesting relationships (Tables 6.11, 6.12). Both male and female Irish-speakers are significantly over-represented in the top two social classes. Those are the professional occupations and the managerial and technical occupations respectively. Females are especially over-represented in the latter social class. Also, males in particular are over-represented in the class 'No Paid Job in Last Ten Years'. Relationships between the language and economic activity are more complex again (Tables 6.13, 6.14). Male Irish-speakers tend to be more likely to be out of

Table 6.11 Male Irish-speakers by social class, NI 1991

<i>Social class</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>	<i>Number of non-Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>
1	2,449	7.5	15,385	4.1
2	8,772	26.6	79,017	21.1
3	11,531	35.2	153,253	41.0
4	3,383	10.3	52,112	13.9
5	1,345	4.1	20,292	5.5
Armed forces etc.	633	1.9	14,462	3.9
Training scheme etc.	890	2.7	7,759	2.1
No paid job in last ten years	3,771	11.5	31,511	8.4

Source: NI Census 1991.

Table 6.12 Female Irish-speakers by social class, NI 1991

<i>Social class</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>	<i>Number of non-Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>
1	792	3.2	3,640	1.5
2	9,447	38.6	57,087	22.8
3	7,822	32.0	102,602	40.9
4	3,052	12.5	44,206	17.6
5	1,037	4.2	22,634	9.0
Armed forces etc.	307	1.3	3,493	1.4
Training scheme etc.	496	2.0	4,100	1.6
No paid job in last ten years	1,523	6.2	13,056	5.2

Source: NI Census 1991.

Table 6.13 Male Irish-speakers by economic activity, NI 1991

<i>Economic activity</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>	<i>Number of non-Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>
Total economically active	32,733	71.4	373,993	72.9
Total economically inactive	13,084	28.6	139,361	27.1
Total in employment	24,634	53.8	304,766	59.4
Total out of employment	8,099	17.7	69,227	13.5
Self-employed	5,103	11.1	58,664	11.4
Managers	2,500	5.5	29,528	5.8
Foremen and supervisors	858	1.9	12,552	2.4
Professional employees	1,596	3.5	11,868	2.3
Other employees	13,687	29.9	184,395	35.9
Students	6,362	13.9	28,884	5.6
Training	890	1.9	7,759	1.5
Retired	3,586	7.8	73,106	14.2

Source: NI Census 1991.

employment than their non-Irish-speaking counterparts and much more likely than female Irish-speakers to be in this category. However, male Irish-speakers, as with their female counterparts, are more likely to be professional employees than the rest of the resident population in NI. Female Irish-speakers are over-represented among the economically active population and are, as a result, over-represented among those who are both in and out of employment. Irish-speakers of both sexes are much more likely to be pursuing further higher education than the rest of the population. They are also very substantially under-represented among the retired, confirming the young age structure of the Irish-speaking population.

The socio-economic patterns derived from the census data are interesting in that they appear to confirm some historical beliefs about the Irish language and, more importantly, in that they may also indicate ways in which the language has broken with its historical past characterised by decline and marginalisation. Also, the potential for certain features of the

Table 6.14 Female Irish-speakers by economic activity, NI 1991

<i>Economic activity</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>	<i>Number of non-Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>
Total economically active	24,476	48.3	250,818	44.9
Total economically inactive	26,246	51.7	307,227	55.1
Total in employment	21,497	42.4	224,053	40.1
Total out of employment	2,979	5.9	26,765	4.8
Self-employed	846	1.7	9,102	1.6
Managers	1,198	2.4	11,603	2.1
Foremen and supervisors	856	1.7	8,995	1.6
Professional employees	678	1.3	3,092	0.6
Other employees	17,422	34.3	187,162	33.5
Students	7,940	15.7	31,343	5.6
Training	496	1.0	4,100	0.7
Retired	4,785	9.4	99,299	17.8

Source: NI Census 1991.

contemporary socio-economic context of the language in NI to further promote the resurgence of Irish is not inconsiderable. As pointed out elsewhere (Aitchison and Carter, 1987), much of the literature on minority languages, and the case of the Irish language in NI is no exception, is influenced by Hechter's ideas on 'internal colonisation' and 'the cultural division of labour' (Hechter, 1975). What this means is that groups which are peripheral to the core of any given state are differentiated by such features as religion, culture and language, and as a consequence experience differential access to the resources of the state. Because of this such groups become disadvantaged and marginalised. This does characterise much of the experience of Irish-speakers throughout Ireland during the last century and in NI for much of this century. Several sources (Maguire, 1991; Andrews, 1991; O'Reilly, 1995) point up the indifference, if not hostility, of the state in NI to the Irish language and the subsequent effect on the Irish-speaking population. The socio-economic profile of the Irish-speaking community in NI may well confirm this legacy in that Irish-speakers are over-represented in the lowest socio-economic class, the long-term unemployed. Regarding the potential for the growth and development of the Irish language community it is very significant that Irish-speakers are over-represented in the urban-dwelling, well-educated, professional, managerial and technical classes. This profile is confirmed, though not analysed, in the brief exploration of aspects of the SARs (Samples of Anonymised Records) pertaining to the 1991 Census in NI by Nic Craith and Shuttleworth (1996).

The appearance of Irish-speakers in the higher-level socio-economic classes may be explained by turning to the wider socio-economic context. The historic support of the Irish language in limited sectors of the education system in NI (Andrews, 1991) is one factor. The recognition by central

government of Irish-medium schools (Mac Póilin, 1992; Nic Craith, 1997), increasing recognition of the language at the level of local government and the increasing provision of Irish language broadcasting on English-medium radio and television have given significant stimulus to the language. Since 1991 the creation of *Teilifís na Gaeilge* and increasing recognition of Irish-medium education have provided further stimulus. Similar developments in Wales during the 1980s, including the establishment of *Sianel Pedwar Cymru* (S4C) and the passing of a Welsh Language Act, appear to have prompted the increasing instrumentality of the Welsh language, resulting in the appearance of Welsh-speakers in greater proportions in higher socio-economic classes and especially so in Cardiff, a transformation described as a ‘quiet revolution’ (Aitchison and Carter, 1987). The authors of a Euro-mosaic report (*Irish in the North of Ireland*, <<http://www.uoc.es/euro-mosaic>>, p. 6) confirm the economic vibrancy of the Republic of Ireland as adding to the instrumental value of the Irish language in general. They also suggest that the close proximity of Irish in NI to Scottish Gaelic, both geographically and linguistically, could be exploited through collaborative projects in the broadcast media, for example, thereby further reinforcing the instrumental value of the Irish language in NI.

A significant difference between the census questionnaire for NI and for the rest of the UK was the absence of a question on ethnic identity. In NI a question on religious denomination fills this gap (Openshaw, 1995: 38). The census data on the Irish language in relation to religion (Table 6.15) shows that the overwhelming majority of Irish-speakers are Roman Catholics. Over 89 per cent of all Irish-speakers stated that they were Roman Catholics. This means the Roman Catholics are grossly over-represented amongst Irish-speakers. Not all Roman Catholics are Irish-speakers, however (20.6 per cent of Roman Catholics stated that they spoke Irish). Other religious denominations are grossly under-represented among Irish-speakers. Irish-speakers who represent the three main Protestant denominations, Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist

Table 6.15 Irish-speakers by religion, NI 1991

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Number of Irish-speakers</i>	<i>As %</i>	<i>As % of total Irish-speaking population NI</i>
Roman Catholic	118,009	20.6	89.4
Presbyterian	1,383	0.4	1.0
Church of Ireland	1,747	0.7	1.3
Methodist	265	0.5	0.2
Other	1,459	1.2	1.1
Not stated	6,739	6.3	5.1
None	2,372	4.3	1.8

Source: NI Census 1991.

comprise less than 3 per cent of the Irish-speaking community. Less than 2 per cent of all respondents identifying themselves as belonging to one of the three main Protestant traditions returned themselves as Irish-speakers. Those respondents who returned themselves in the 'None' and 'Not Stated' categories comprise 6.9 per cent of the total Irish-speaking community. This figure indicates that respondents of this nature are under-represented among Irish-speakers.

The results of the 2001 census broadly confirm the socio-demographic contours of the Irish language as delineated by the 1991 data (Table 6.16). Thus, those with 'some knowledge' (understood as having any single skill or any combination of skills in the Irish language – understand, read, write, speak) of the language are more likely to be female (Table 6.17), be of school age (Table 6.18) and be Roman Catholic (Table 6.19). The 2001

Table 6.16 Knowledge of Irish, NI 2001

	<i>Number</i>	<i>As %</i>
Has some knowledge of Irish	167,490	10.4
Has no knowledge of Irish	1,450,467	89.6
All persons	1,617,957	100.0

Source: NI Census 2001.

Table 6.17 Knowledge of Irish by gender, NI 2001

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>All</i>
Has some knowledge of Irish	79,858 (10.1%)	87,632 (10.5%)	167,490 (10.4%)
Has no knowledge of Irish	707,038 (89.9%)	743,429 (89.5%)	1,450,467 (89.6%)
All persons	786,896 (100.0%)	831,061 (100.0%)	1,617,957 (100.0%)

Source: NI Census 2001.

Table 6.18 Knowledge of Irish by age, NI 2001

	<i>Has some knowledge of Irish</i>	<i>Has no knowledge of Irish</i>	<i>All persons</i>
3–11	13,710 (6.1%)	209,420 (93.9%)	223,130 (100.0%)
12–15	25,662 (23.8%)	81,954 (76.2%)	107,616 (100.0%)
16–24	33,874 (16.0%)	177,608 (84.0%)	211,482 (100.0%)
25–39	39,784 (10.7%)	332,076 (89.3%)	371,860 (100.0%)
40–59	36,772 (9.0%)	370,185 (91.0%)	406,957 (100.0%)
60–74	12,735 (6.5%)	184,045 (93.5%)	196,780 (100.0%)
75+	4,953 (4.9%)	95,179 (95.1%)	100,132 (100.0%)
All	167,490 (10.4%)	1,450,467 (89.6%)	1,617,957 (100.0%)

Source: NI Census 2001.

Table 6.19 Knowledge of Irish by religion, NI 2001

	<i>Has some knowledge of Irish</i>	<i>Has no knowledge of Irish</i>	<i>All persons</i>
Roman Catholic	144,346 (22.2%)	505,316 (77.8%)	649,662 (100.0%)
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	3,608 (1.1%)	335,298 (98.9%)	338,906 (100.0%)
Church of Ireland	3,146 (1.3%)	246,881 (98.7%)	250,027 (100.0%)
Methodist Church in Ireland	634 (1.1%)	56,912 (98.9%)	57,546 (100.0%)
Other Christian	1,331 (1.3%)	97,896 (98.7%)	99,227 (100.0%)
Other religions and philosophies	314 (6.5%)	4,518 (93.5%)	4,832 (100.0%)
No religion or religion not stated	14,110 (6.5%)	203,646 (93.5%)	217,756 (100.0%)
All persons	167,489 (10.4%)	1,450,467 (89.6%)	1,617,956 (100.0%)

Source: NI Census 2001.

census included a new question on ethnic identity. Here the results show that knowledge of the Irish language is recorded amongst all the ethnic groups reported upon (Table 6.20). The group recording the greatest proportion, at just under 20 per cent, is 'Irish traveller'. Also, while in some cases the actual numbers are small, the lowest proportions of persons claiming knowledge of Irish (3.5 per cent for 'Indian' and 3.6 per cent for 'Pakistani') are greater than that recorded for persons claiming affiliation to the main Protestant denominations – 'Presbyterian Church in Ireland' (1.1 per cent), 'Church of Ireland' (1.3 per cent) and 'Methodist Church in Ireland' (1.1 per cent) (Table 6.19). Whether these data are indicative of substantial attitudinal nuances in relation to the Irish language is a moot point. The emergent dynamics of the Irish language in NI, as may be uncovered by census data, merit further research in respect of those features of the language that may not be more fully explored via census data.

Language knowledge

The meaning of the term 'Irish-speaking', as used in the Census, requires some qualification. The form of the question in the Census does not allow for any indication of levels of ability in the language. Some of those respondents who described themselves as Irish-speaking may possess very limited competence in the language. Regarding the Census figures, Mac Póilin offers the following insight: 'Responses appear to have ranged from

Table 6.20 Knowledge of Irish by ethnic group, NI 2001

	<i>Has some knowledge of Irish</i>	<i>Has no knowledge of Irish</i>	<i>All persons</i>
White	166,314 (10.4%)	1,438,272 (89.6%)	1,604,586 (100.0%)
Irish Traveller	314 (19.4%)	1,302 (80.6%)	1,616 (100.0%)
Mixed	276 (9.4%)	2,650 (90.6%)	2,926 (100.0%)
Indian	52 (3.5%)	1,453 (96.5%)	1,505 (100.0%)
Pakistani	22 (3.6%)	597 (96.4%)	619 (100.0%)
Bangladeshi	24 (10.3%)	209 (89.7%)	233 (100.0%)
Other Asian	17 (8.9%)	175 (91.1%)	192 (100.0%)
Black Caribbean	21 (8.6%)	224 (91.4%)	245 (100.0%)
Black African	22 (4.8%)	438 (95.2%)	460 (100.0%)
Other Black	59 (16.1%)	307 (83.9%)	366 (100.0%)
Chinese	265 (6.6%)	3,722 (93.3%)	3,987 (100.0%)
Other ethnic group	103 (8.4%)	1,118 (91.6%)	1,221 (100.0%)
All	167,489 (10.4%)	1,450,467 (89.6%)	1,617,956 (100.0%)

Source: NI Census 2001.

the over-scrupulous to the over-optimistic, so the figures underestimate the numbers who have some knowledge of Irish, but probably exaggerate the number of fluent speakers' (Mac Póilin, 1996: 153).

Data which throw some light on this may be derived from the Euro-mosaic survey. The results of this survey, conducted entirely among Irish-speakers, showed that 28 per cent considered themselves to be 'very good' in their ability to speak the language; 32 per cent considered themselves to be 'quite good'; 39 per cent considered themselves to have only a 'little' Irish; while 1 per cent even reported that they spoke no Irish whatsoever. Should we accept the representativity of these results then we could approximate the size of the functional Irish-speaking population from the 1991 Census at something in the region of 36,000 ('very good' level of ability) up to around 79,000 ('quite good' level of ability). Only 3 per cent of respondents recorded the Irish language as their first language, although a further 17 per cent claim to have acquired both Irish and English at the same time. As the survey was conducted among an adult population of an unknown age range, but being at least over 18 years, none of the respondents would have acquired their Irish since 1980. Most commentators, and especially those within the Irish language community, argue that it was only during the 1980s that the regrowth of the Irish language community took off. Levels of incidence of the Irish language as a first language or mother tongue may well be higher than the 3 per cent recorded by Euromosaic. The results of the survey by Mac Giolla Chríost (2001) show that 9.7 per cent of young Irish-speakers claim the language as their mother tongue.

The data from the 1991 Census suggests that language acquisition may,

on the whole, centre on the educational system rather than on inter-generational transmission. The results of the Euromosaic survey appear to reinforce this analysis. Besides the low number of respondents recording the Irish language as their first language, the use of the language within family units is sporadic: 'the degree of language reproduction, which we have defined in terms of inter-generational transmission is limited to 17 per cent or less' (*Irish in Northern Ireland*, <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>>, p. 1). From the total survey population of 284 only seven cases (3 per cent) were reported in which the sole language of the family was Irish, a further 12 (4 per cent) were reported in which the Irish language was the main language of the family. In 16 per cent of cases English was recorded as the main language of the family with some use of Irish as well. Also, 80 per cent of respondents in the survey claimed to have acquired their Irish at school.

Modest proportions of young Irish-speakers have had their education at any level through the medium of Irish: 12.5 per cent record having had some or all of their nursery education through the medium of Irish; the proportion at primary level rises to 37.6 per cent; at secondary level the greatest proportion of all is to be found at 64.5 per cent (Table 6.21). This would indicate that the majority have acquired the language as a second language and as a distinct subject at both primary and, to a greater extent, at secondary level. Results regarding levels of self-perception of ability in Irish show that levels of ability among the young vary quite significantly (Table 6.22). A minority of 10.6 per cent place themselves in the highest rating with regard to speaking the language, a total of 38.3 per cent consider themselves to be above average. Claims with regard to reading Irish are slightly more modest with 36.1 per cent claiming above average ability, 25.5 per cent claiming average ability and 38.3 per cent claiming to be below average. Self-perceptions in respect of ability in writing Irish are slightly more modest again. The smallest proportion of respondents, at 24.8 per cent, return themselves as possessing above average ability in writing, almost one-third (31.2 per cent) claim no more than average levels

Table 6.21 Irish-speakers by education through the medium of Irish (%)

<i>Education level</i>	<i>Amount through Irish</i>		
	<i>All</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Young people 16–18</i>			
Nursery	6	7	87
Primary	7	31	62
Secondary	1	63	36
<i>Adults >18</i>			
Nursery	1	1	96
Primary	1	27	71
Secondary	1	42	57

Table 6.22 Irish-speakers by levels of ability in speaking, reading, writing and understanding Irish (%)

Skill	Level of ability				
	Lowest	Lower	Average	Higher	Highest
<i>Young people 16–18</i>					
Speaking	19	12	31	27	11
Reading	27	11	25	29	8
Writing	25	19	31	18	7
Understanding	22	16	27	22	13
<i>Adults >18</i>					
Speaking	32	19	15	18	16
Reading	35	10	20	20	15
Writing	39	13	22	13	13
Understanding	31	14	16	16	23

of ability and the remainder at 44.1 per cent profess below average levels of ability in this language skill. As regard to understanding Irish, 12.6 per cent of respondents return themselves as having the highest level of ability, with over one-third (34.7 per cent) as a whole claiming above average ability. A significant minority of adult Irish-speakers (11.3 per cent) record the Irish language as their mother tongue. Some other respondents appear to have acquired Irish through their primary and secondary level education. Very few Irish-speakers (3.6 per cent) record having had any of their nursery education through the medium of Irish; 29 per cent indicate that they experienced at least some Irish-medium education at primary level; 43.5 per cent record having had at least some Irish medium education at secondary level. Levels of ability to speak Irish are quite diverse among adult Irish-speakers (Table 6.22). 16.1 per cent claim the highest level of ability, while a total of 33.9 per cent claim to be of better than average ability. Levels of ability in reading Irish are not dissimilar in their profile, with 15 per cent returning themselves as having the highest level and a total of 35 per cent claiming better than average ability. Lower levels of ability are reported with regard to writing Irish: 12.9 per cent claim the highest level, with a total of 26.7 per cent claiming better than average ability. The highest incidences in the higher levels of ability are to be found in relation to understanding Irish: 23 per cent indicate that their ability in writing Irish is in the highest category, with a total of 39.3 per cent claiming better than average ability.

The levels of literacy (Table 6.23) of this young Irish-speaking population vary little throughout NI. The overall profile of literacy would suggest two significant levels of literacy, the first, comprising 59.9 per cent of the total population with any knowledge of Irish attaining the highest level of literacy, and the second, comprising 34.4 per cent of the population with any knowledge of Irish only being able to speak the language.

Table 6.23 Literacy profile of Irish-speakers, NI 1991 (%)

<i>Speak Irish only</i>	<i>Speak and read but not write Irish</i>	<i>Speak, read and write Irish</i>
34.4	5.0	59.9

Source: NI Census 1991.

It is worth pointing out at this stage that in the 1981 Census in the Republic of Ireland just over 31 per cent of the population aged 3 and above were reported as having some competency in Irish (Ó Murchú, 1992), whereas in the 1991 Census in NI (DHSS/RGNI, 1993) the comparable figure was around 10 per cent. Clearly the dynamics of the Irish language communities in the two parts of Ireland are very different. The literacy profile for the Irish-speakers recorded in the Census is similar to that for Gwent in south-eastern Wales. This area was an English-speaking part of the region for many generations but has witnessed a rejuvenation of the Welsh language since the 1980s (Aitchison and Carter, 1994). A recent survey suggests that levels of literacy among Irish-speakers are ‘relatively high’ (*Irish in Northern Ireland*, <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>>, p. 3), although the figures presented indicate that 52 per cent of respondents recorded themselves as having ‘little’ ability or ‘none’ with regard to the reading of Irish, and 57 per cent described themselves as having ‘little’ ability or ‘none’ in the writing of the language. Indeed, such a profile contrasts with that of Welsh-speaking populations in traditionally Welsh-speaking parts of Wales in which the language has been transmitted inter-generationally over a very long period of time. The literacy profile for the Irish-speaking community, from the language information currently available, would suggest modest levels of literacy, reflecting the recent acquisition of the language on the part of the overwhelming majority of the community and the limited education in Irish for the Irish-speakers surveyed in the Euromosaic project. Indeed, other results from the Euromosaic survey confirm that only 4 per cent of the respondents experienced Irish-medium education at primary level, with even smaller proportions at higher levels of education. Considering the growth of the Irish-medium sector during the 1980s and 1990s one would expect to see greater proportions of the population under 18 years of age to experience Irish-medium education, and one would expect that the literacy profile in this age group would show greater levels of ability in the reading and writing of Irish.

Language use

Language use is another key issue and it may be explored with reference to the Euromosaic survey and other academic sources. The diverse ways in

which the Irish language has been acquired by the Irish-speaking population is, perhaps, reflected in the modesty of the claims in levels of ability in the language. A minority of Irish-speakers return themselves as having better than average ability in the language. These modest levels of ability translate into limited use of the language in very clearly defined networks centring on the immediate family, friends, the school, the Church and, for adults, the workplace. Data on language use are available from the Euromosaic survey. The data on language use within the immediate family suggest that 'about 7% use Irish exclusively in the home ... while a further 16% use at least some Irish' (*Irish in Northern Ireland*, <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>>, p. 5). Only 3 per cent of respondents claimed that Irish was the only language used when communicating with their parents and a further 4 per cent claimed that Irish was the main language of communication in this relationship. Only 6 per cent of partners used Irish together exclusively, while a further 16 per cent, according to the survey, used some Irish in communicating with their partner. The use of language with the children of the household is more extensive: 'about 12% use Irish exclusively with their children and a further 27% use some Irish with their children' (*Irish in Northern Ireland*, <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>>, p. 5). Perceptions of ability within the family are suggestive of a decline in the levels of competency in Irish across three successive generations: grandparents–parents–children.

For the majority of Irish-speakers the use of Irish beyond the home appears to be located within a number of closely defined spheres, in particular sporting and cultural activities, but that English and not Irish has normative status. For others, Irish is the main language of a small, close-knit network of Irish-speakers. Despite the problems with the way in which the questions related to the data presented in Table 11 in the report in the Euromosaic survey, the results can be used to cast some light on language use among the respondents. The data appear to show that the respondents' use of Irish in the community depended to a great extent on interpersonal knowledge. The language was most used in social interaction in the pub, in communicating with the teacher of their children, in communicating with the priest and with the local councillor. In contrast, very little use of Irish was noted in relation with state and semi-state organisations or their representatives; for example, 'driving test', 'water bill', 'department of social security' and 'tax office' all scored zero. Other results indicate that various activities, while they are not conducted entirely through the medium of Irish, provide opportunities for use of Irish, including theatre visits, the Church, the Gaelic Athletic Association, choir and drama groups, local politics and the local *Feis*. Also, over a third of respondents listened to Irish language radio broadcasts; over 40 per cent watched Irish language television broadcasts. Around 20 per cent regularly read Irish language books and a similar proportion read Irish language newspapers. According to the respondents, Irish-speaking children's activity through

the medium of Irish centres largely on educational activities, particularly the local *Feis* (not dissimilar to the Welsh *Eisteddfod*) and the annual sojourn to the Gaeltacht to improve language skills. Various cultural events such as traditional festivals, musical and theatrical events appear to provide a vehicle for some level of bilingual interaction. Sporting events and Sunday school register very low on the scale and are largely English language experiences.

Other research (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2001) on the use of the Irish language confirms that it is clearly confined to certain domains. The data indicate that very few households are wholly Irish-speaking (Table 6.24). Only 3.2 per cent of young Irish-speakers indicate that they always use Irish in communication with their parents, and only 1.1 per cent always use Irish in communicating with their siblings. In addition to this 6.3 per cent ‘often’ use Irish with their parents and 11.7 per cent claim the same level of usage with their siblings; 54.7 per cent ‘never’ use Irish with their parents and 39.4 per cent ‘never’ use Irish with their siblings. Levels of use are slightly lower in contacts with relatives. No young respondents claim to use the language all the time with relatives and only 6.3 per cent claim to use Irish ‘often’; 57.9 per cent ‘never’ use Irish to communicate with relatives. More use is made of Irish with friends. Only 26.6 per cent claim ‘never’ to use Irish with their friends; 2.1 per cent ‘always’ do so; and 14.9 per cent ‘often’ communicate with their friends in Irish. The results of the survey indicate that use of the Irish language among adult Irish-speakers is limited. Few adult respondents (5.2 per cent) indicate that they ‘always’ use Irish in communication with their children; a further 8.6 per cent claim to use the language ‘often’ in this context; 36.2 per cent ‘never’ use Irish with their children. Levels of use with children are none the less greater

Table 6.24 Irish-speakers by use of Irish in domestic relationships (%)

Relationship	Extent to which Irish is spoken				
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
<i>Young people 16–18</i>					
Parents	55	15	21	6	3
Siblings	39	20	28	12	1
Ex. Family	58	17	19	6	–
Friends	27	22	34	15	2
<i>Adults >18</i>					
Parents	72	14	7	5	2
Partner	61	19	16	4	–
Children	36	17	33	9	5
Siblings	66	11	13	7	3
Ex. Family	68	15	8	7	2
Friends	47	13	25	10	5

than levels of use with the older generation. Only 1.8 per cent of adult respondents claim to 'always' use Irish with their parents and a further 5.4 per cent claim to 'often' use Irish in this context. Levels of use are lower still with partners. No adult respondent claims to 'always' use Irish with their partner, and only 7.4 per cent claim to use Irish 'often' in this context. Reported levels of use of Irish on the part of adult respondents with siblings are quite low, with 3.3 per cent claiming to 'always' use Irish and 6.5 per cent claiming to 'often' use Irish in this context; 65.6 per cent claim 'never' to use Irish with siblings. The profile of use of Irish with siblings is very similar to that for other relatives of the adult respondents; 68.3 per cent claim 'never' to use Irish, 6.7 per cent claim to 'often' use Irish and 1.7 per cent claim to 'always' use Irish with other relatives. The greatest levels of use of Irish among adult respondents are to be found in relation to friends; 4.9 per cent report that they 'always' use Irish with their friends; a further 9.8 per cent claim that they 'often' do so.

Among young Irish-speakers the language appears to enjoy frequent use in relation to the school (Table 6.25). Only 20.4 per cent claim 'never' to use Irish in school in contrast to 39.8 per cent doing so 'often' or 'always'. The language is used less so in other contexts beyond the school: 73.9 per cent 'never' use Irish in discos or clubs; 63.4 per cent 'never' use Irish in shops. Use of the language is slightly more prevalent in relation to the Church, with 10.8 per cent using Irish 'often' or 'always' and 47.3 per cent 'never' making use of the language in church. Of young Irish-speakers 11 per cent claim to attend an Irish language club or society either 'often' or 'very often'. Passive use of the Irish language is significant (Table 6.26): 19.4 per cent of young Irish-speakers read an Irish book and magazine 'often' or 'very often'; 21.7 per cent listen to Irish-medium radio

Table 6.25 Irish-speakers by use of Irish in public settings (%)

<i>Public setting</i>	<i>Extent to which Irish is spoken</i>				
	<i>Never</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
<i>Young people 16-18</i>					
Church	47	16	26	8	3
Banks	95	3	2	—	—
Shops	63	24	12	1	—
Disco/club	74	7	9	8	2
School	20	10	30	38	2
<i>Adults >18</i>					
Church	64	13	15	5	3
Banks	90	3	7	—	—
Shops	71	19	10	—	—
Place of work	66	12	9	9	4
School	62	8	13	12	5
Council	88	7	3	1	—

Table 6.26 Irish-speakers by use of Irish language media (%)

<i>Medium</i>	<i>Extent to which Irish is spoken</i>				
	<i>Never</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Very often</i>
<i>Young people 16–18</i>					
Magazine/paper	38	21	21	13	7
Book	39	15	27	11	8
Radio	37	23	18	11	11
TV	15	13	40	18	14
Society	63	13	13	7	4
<i>Adults >18</i>					
Magazine/paper	42	23	16	6	13
Book	42	27	15	5	11
Radio	39	14	16	13	18
TV	26	16	30	13	15
Society	57	13	16	6	8

broadcasts ‘often’ or ‘very often’; and 32.2 per cent watch Irish-medium television broadcasts ‘often’ or ‘very often’. Use of the language by adult speakers beyond personal relationships varies according to the domain. The highest levels of use are to be found in relation to the school with 4.9 per cent ‘always’ using Irish and 11.5 per cent ‘often’ using Irish. Similar levels of use are to be found in relation to the place of work: 5.2 per cent report that they ‘always’ use Irish in their place of work; a further 8.6 per cent report that they ‘often’ do so. Slightly lower levels of use are reported in relation to the Church: 3.3 per cent of adult respondents claim to ‘always’ use Irish; 5 per cent often do so. Levels of use with the council, shops and banks are significantly lower, with overwhelming majorities claiming to ‘never’ use Irish – 88.1, 71 and 90.2 per cent respectively. Levels of participation in Irish-medium activities are modest, with 14.5 per cent of adult respondents frequenting an Irish language club or society ‘often’ or ‘very often’, while 56.5 per cent ‘never’ do so. The survey results indicate that some of the more passive language activities are enjoyed by a significant minority of adult Irish-speakers: 16.1 per cent of adult Irish-speakers read Irish language books ‘often’ or ‘very often’ and 19.4 per cent read Irish language newspapers or magazines; 30.6 per cent listen to Irish language radio broadcasts ‘often’ or ‘very often’ and 27.4 per cent watch Irish language television broadcasts ‘often’ or ‘very often’.

Language attitudes

This is a crucial area for understanding the place of the Irish language in society in NI. Clearly the nature of the Census does not enable attitudinal issues to be explored using that dataset. In this section the primary point of reference will be the results of the survey by Mac Giolla Chríost (2001).

This is because the nature of the questions on that particular survey allow for broad comparisons to be drawn between the results of that survey and the other language surveys in the Republic of Ireland analysed in the previous chapter. The results of the Euromosaic survey do provide some information on language attitudes, and use is made of them in this discussion. As the survey was confined, however, to NI and was very different to the language surveys conducted in the Republic of Ireland, few points of meaningful comparison can be ascertained.

There are certain difficulties which relate specifically to analysing the significance of the results derived from attitude surveys carried out in NI. Whyte makes the point:

A particular weakness in the case of Northern Ireland is that surveys may not give accurate results because not all respondents tell the truth. There is some ground for thinking that, in reply to questionnaires, Northern Ireland people express more moderate views than they really hold.

(Whyte, 1990: 4)

Others note the same problem; for example:

Popular moderation that is often displayed in opinion polls must . . . be treated with scepticism. Polls are imperfect, especially so in deeply divided territories where respondents may be unwilling to tell the pollster what they really think. They may judge their views to be outside conventional norms, or that their real views, given to a stranger, may put them at considerable risk. The evidence from Northern Ireland is that opinion polls tend to over emphasise moderation and downplay extremism.

(McGarry and O'Leary, 1993: 849)

Whyte notes that voting intentions in relation to Sinn Féin and the Alliance Party differ by only some 3–4 per cent from actual voting patterns, suggesting to him that variations between responses to attitude surveys and actual behaviour are limited. Whyte concludes that: 'The surveys may exaggerate moderate opinion, but not so much as to bear no relation to reality' (Whyte, 1990: 5). Bearing this caveat in mind it is to the presentation and analysis of the attitudinal data from the surveys that we now turn our attention.

Explaining the growth of the Irish language community in the region is a key issue. Some argue that it is simply related to increasing levels of awareness of ethnic identity (Maguire, 1991; O'Reilly, 1995). The very low numbers of Protestants recorded as Irish-speakers by the 1991 Census and the higher densities of Irish-speakers in areas such as west Belfast may be seen as *prima facie* support to this view. Some authors argue that the

recent political history of NI has reinforced awareness of senses of Irish ethnic identity in the region, the Irish language being a very powerful medium for articulating this identity. A parallel may be drawn for this in the Republic of Ireland around the turn of the century where a strong relationship between senses of Irish ethnic identity and the Irish language presaged the political independence of the 26 counties and a violent political landscape.

The relationship between the language and Irish ethnic identity is described by O'Reilly as follows:

As the primary symbol of Irish ethnicity, the Irish language has become an important emblem to many Catholics in west Belfast. Under the unique circumstances of partition and the current conflict, it is a marker which distinguishes them from the British and at times from Protestants as well.

(O'Reilly, 1995: 14)

O'Reilly suggests (1995: 8) that the prolonged nature of the 'troubles' in NI may well have created the sociological conditions for this more intense sense of ethnic identity. She perceives (1995: 5) a close relationship between the language and nationalism, as does Maguire (1991: 99). Pritchard (1990: 30) quotes a survey carried out by Glór na nGael in west Belfast during 1984 and 1985 in which 61 per cent of respondents stated that the H-block protests of Irish Republican prisoners was the main factor which encouraged them to learn Irish. In the Euromosaic document, *Irish in the North of Ireland*, it is contended that: 'it [NI] is a territory which is subject to different political claims and much of the salience of the Irish language within this area pertains to this contentious issue' (*Irish in the North of Ireland*, <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>>, p. 10), and '[a]s might be expected given the ideological importance of Irish for those who claim to speak it links with the Republic of Ireland are strong' (*Irish in the North of Ireland*, <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>>, p. 1). Mac Póilin asserts:

There is no doubt that political nationalism often provides the stimulus for involvement in the language movement in Northern Ireland, and is in fact, the source of much of the vitality of the present phase of the movement there.

(Mac Póilin, 1996: 158)

Others note (Jarman, 1993; de Baroid, 1990) that the practice of renaming streets in Irish in nationalist areas, a practice which dates from the 1980s, is an act of opposition to British rule. During the 1992 British General Election Proinsias Mac Aonghusa, president of Conradh na Gaeilge and chair of Bord na Gaeilge (Irish Language Board) encouraged voters in the

constituency of west Belfast to vote for Gerry Adams of Sinn Féin (*Anois*, 5 April 1992). A more recent president of Conradh na Gaeilge, Gearóid Ó Cairealláin, was noted (*Irish Times*, 21 May 1996; *Lá*, 23 May 1996) to have given a triumphalist nationalist speech during the *Ard-Fheis*, the most important event in the calendar of the society, and that being held in Belfast for the first time. This was despite the explicitly non-political opening speech of John Robb:

Tá sé in am cuimhneamh go bhfuil an Ghaeilge os cionn na polaitíochta . . . Déan an Ghaeilge a choinneáil scartha on pholaitíocht náisiúnta agus deanfaidh an teanga an tír a aontú. [It is time to remember that the Irish language is above politics . . . Make the Irish language keep clear from nationalist politics and the language will unite the country.]

(*Lá*, 23 May 1996)

Previous British governments would appear to have recognised a link between the language and nationalist politics. On the granting of a substantial grant to Ultach Trust, a junior minister remarked that '[language] has been torn out of the cultural context and has become a political weapon' (*Irish Times*, 4 April 1991). At the same time Glór na nGael in Belfast lost substantial government funding as it was seen to be 'improving the standing and furthering the aims of paramilitary groups' (*Irish Times*, 4 April 1991). It may be in the context of intervention of this nature that many within the Irish language community form their opinions of the nature of the commitment to the Irish language on the part of the government in NI. The results of the Euromosaic survey show that most respondents believed that the language was of little interest to the government (*Irish in Northern Ireland*, <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>>, p. 20): 47 per cent of respondents gave the government the lowest possible rating. Of the various institutions in this aspect of the survey the government was perceived to have the least interest of all in the Irish language.

Despite this there is a body of evidence which suggests that the case for the ethnic value of the Irish language in Northern Ireland is overstated. Such sources suggest that relationships between the Irish language and socio-cultural identity possess a higher degree of complexity. For example, research by Northover and Donnelly (1996) among Catholic adult learners of the language shows that their pursuit of the language is not motivated in particular by any enhanced sense of Irish ethnic identity. They note that 'those who do not learn Irish are not essentially different in their self-perception of ethnic identification from learners' (Northover and Donnelly, 1996: 45). Furthermore, the Euromosaic document *Irish in Northern Ireland* notes the following from the survey data derived from the Euromosaic project: 'What is surprising is that a substantial number do not feel . . . that the language makes one "more Irish" than non-speakers.

That is, the symbolic value of the language is limited' (*Irish in the North of Ireland*, <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>>, p. 18). Most respondents (54 per cent) did not feel that having Irish was essential to being Irish; 26 per cent of respondents agreed with the assertion. This feature of the Euromosaic dataset seems to have confused the authors of this document, something which is clear in the conclusion:

Irish is one of the symbolic element[s] around which the very close knit, highly politicised community is constituted. Yet as a symbol of being Irish it is by no means universal. This is probably a realistic reflection on the nature of Irish society and of the place of both the language and the respondent in such a society. Being a member of the Irish language community (that is, those selected for interviews) involves not being British much more than it does being able to speak Irish. That is, personal identity is much more highly politicised than it is bound with the embeddedness of language in its symbolic context. Language is only one of the objects around which the notions of Ireland and Irishness is assigned meaning.

(*Irish in the North of Ireland*, <<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic>>, p. 20)

The difficulties the authors of this document have in interpreting the data from the Euromosaic survey would be surmounted in part by reference to other language surveys on this question in both the Republic of Ireland and also, on a more modest scale, in NI. The difficulties are compounded by the way in which the idea of national or ethnic identity is perceived by Euromosaic. The survey is clearly grounded in a simplistic bipolar British–Irish understanding of identity. Five categories of identity were employed in the survey: Irish, British, English, European and Other. This range of choices does not appear to be informed by any other social survey of significance. Indeed, the inclusion of the category 'English' is bizarre, especially as the various categories are, according to the document, overlapping to some extent. A broader and more sophisticated conception of national or ethnic identity would have facilitated a clearer understanding of this key issue. Also, there are important structural reasons for the low levels of competence in the Irish language among Protestants; the almost total absence of the language from the curriculum of state schools (hence largely Protestant) made the language greatly inaccessible to Protestants. The exclusion of non-Irish-speakers from the Euromosaic survey meant that very little, if any, material was collected during the course of the survey which could reliably inform on attitudes which were representative of the Protestant population in any sense of the word. The relationship between Protestants and non-nationalists and the language is taken as read.

A broader range of attitudinal issues relating to the Irish language was tested by Mac Giolla Chríost (2000, 2001). These results have value in ref-

erencing attitude to a range of factors, including ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic class within a target population comprising young people aged 16–18 and their parents, and including Irish-speakers and non-Irish-speakers. Some useful insights were drawn from this survey as a whole. Among younger respondents perceptions of the nature of the Irish-speaking community vary according to senses of ethnic and religious identity and whether they speak Irish or not. British identifiers, Protestants and non-Irish-speakers are more conservative than other respondents in their measure of the extent of the Irish-speaking community and its likely growth. Younger respondents of all types are supportive of the language in general terms and would seek its maintenance, though not to the extent of attempting to shape a bilingual society of any sort in NI. Attitudes among younger respondents in relation to the language in political context vary according to a number of factors. While respondents of all types agree that there is too much politics in the language in NI Irish and Northern Irish identifiers, Irish-speakers and, to a lesser extent, Catholics are more likely to contend that the government does not do enough for the language and that the place of the Irish language on school curricula should be broadened. The views of younger respondents of all types concur in rejecting the idea of being Irish-speaking as offering a more authentic sense of Irishness. Irish and Northern Irish identifiers, Catholics and Irish-speakers are clear in their belief that the Irish language belongs to all the people of NI and that the language is a part of their cultural identity and tradition. The attitudes of British identifiers, Protestants and non-Irish-speakers are much more ambiguous. Many respondents in these categories agree that the language does belong to all the people of NI. Many Protestants identify with the language as a part of their cultural identity and heritage as well. The clearest rejection of the latter concept is amongst young British identifiers and non-Irish-speakers, although significant minorities in these categories also express such an identification with the language.

The attitudes of adult respondents tend to be more complex than those of younger respondents. Additional factors such as gender, occupation and education play a greater role. There is very little variation among adult respondents with regard to perceptions of the extent and growth of the Irish-speaking community. One variation of note is that respondents with lower levels of education tend to believe most strongly of all in the likely future growth of the Irish-speaking community. Respondents of all types are in agreement as to the value of the Irish language in general terms and are convinced of the necessity of its preservation. Some variation is to be found with regard to the development of a bilingual society in NI. Only among female respondents is there a majority in favour of bilingualism – and that with English as the main language. Irish identifiers, Irish-speakers and respondents with a professional occupation are more likely to concur in this than respondents of any other type, though only to a small degree.

Those with a managerial occupation are clearest in their opposition to such developments.

Identifications with the language among adults vary according to senses of ethnic and religious identity, gender, occupation and HAQ. Most respondents of all types agree in their rejection of the idea of Irish-speaking being necessary to an authentic sense of Irish identity. Irish identifiers, Northern Irish identifiers and Catholics are more likely to agree that the Irish language belongs to all the people of NI than are British identifiers and Protestants. Respondents with the latter two characteristics are much more ambiguous in relation to this issue, with substantial proportions in agreement and also in disagreement with the proposition. Female respondents are most assertive of all in their very strong levels of agreement that the language belongs to all in NI. Attitudes towards the language as a feature of cultural identity and heritage are more clear cut in relation to senses of ethnic and religious identity. Irish identifiers, Northern Irish identifiers and Catholics firmly identify with the language in this way, while British identifiers and Protestants tend to reject this. Further variation on this issue is to be found in relation to gender, occupation and HAQ. Females are more likely than males to identify with the language as a part of their cultural identity. Respondents with a professional occupation or in the lower occupation groups are also more likely to concur in this than are respondents with other occupations. Similarly, respondents with the highest and lowest levels of education are more likely to concur than are those with middle levels of education.

Attitudes among Irish-speakers in particular are worth elaborating upon. The results of the survey showed that most Irish-speakers consider the Irish-speaking community in NI to comprise thousands but not tens of thousands of speakers (Table 6.27). While modest in their perception of the size of the Irish-speaking population, Irish-speakers are more assertive in claiming that the Irish-speaking community has grown in the past decade (Table 6.28) and that it is likely to continue to do so in the near future as well (Table 6.29). Unsurprisingly, Irish-speakers felt that the Irish language was something worth preserving (Table 6.30), and not merely within the Gaeltacht (Table 6.31). That said, only a minority of Irish-speakers aspired towards the realisation of a bilingual society in NI,

Table 6.27 Irish-speakers by perceptions of the size of the Irish-speaking community (%)

	<i>Perceived size of Irish-speaking community</i>				
	<i>None</i>	<i>Very few (10s)</i>	<i>Some (100s)</i>	<i>Many (1,000s)</i>	<i>Very many (10,000s)</i>
Young Irish-speakers	–	1	33	54	12
Adult Irish-speakers	–	3	22	59	16

Table 6.28 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8e: 'More Irish is being spoken in NI compared with ten years ago' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	10	9	24	23	34
Adult Irish-speakers	13	4	9	19	55

Table 6.29 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8k: 'More Irish will be spoken in NI ten years from now' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	6	12	28	21	33
Adult Irish-speakers	3	3	23	19	52

Table 6.30 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8a: 'The Irish language should be discarded and forgotten' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	78	9	5	1	7
Adult Irish-speakers	88	3	4	2	3

Table 6.31 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8b: 'Spoken Irish should be preserved only in the Gaeltacht' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	66	14	9	4	7
Adult Irish-speakers	77	14	6	3	—

either with English as the main language (Table 6.32) or Irish (Table 6.33). In fact, levels of support for the latter were even lower. Despite the limited nature of general aspirations for the language the overwhelming majority of Irish-speakers expressed dissatisfaction with British government policy in relation to the language in NI (Table 6.34) and, moreover, it was widely agreed that Irish language issues in general were too politicised (Table 6.35). This was immediately prior to the signing of the political settlement 'The Agreement'.

Other results indicated subtle complexities regarding attitudes towards relationships between the Irish language and ethnicity. On the one hand, it was clear that the majority of Irish-speakers surveyed did not consider any particular group to obtain to an exclusive ownership of the Irish language

Table 6.32 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8c: 'NI should be bilingual with English as the main language' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	15	21	30	24	10
Adult Irish-speakers	20	9	35	19	17

Table 6.33 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8d: 'NI should be bilingual with Irish as the main language' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	20	18	33	17	12
Adult Irish-speakers	38	9	31	9	13

Table 6.34 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8f: 'The government does enough for the Irish language in NI' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	47	26	15	5	7
Adult Irish-speakers	45	12	23	4	15

Table 6.35 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8j: 'There is too much politics in the Irish language in NI' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	10	8	34	22	26
Adult Irish-speakers	14	5	20	17	44

(Table 6.36), nor did the majority of Irish-speakers consider the ability to speak Irish to be an essential feature of Irish identity (Table 6.37). On the other hand, the results also indicated the existence of an exclusive attitude among certain sections of the Irish-speaking community in this matter, and they suggested that it appeared to be especially related to levels of ability in Irish. For example, a significant minority of adult Irish-speakers of the lowest levels of ability very strongly disagreed with the proposition that the Irish language belonged to all the people in NI (Table 6.38). Also, small majorities of Irish-speakers of the highest levels of ability adhered to the view that in order to be truly Irish one must be able to speak Irish (Table 6.39). There is some evidence from the same survey that females are more likely to hold to such views than males (See Mac Giolla Chríost,

Table 6.36 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8g: 'The Irish language belongs to all the people in NI' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	9	5	13	22	51
Adult Irish-speakers	11	6	8	14	61

Table 6.37 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8m: 'In order to be truly Irish one must be able to speak Irish' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	30	16	20	20	14
Adult Irish-speakers	34	13	28	16	9

Table 6.38 Levels of ability in speaking Irish by responses to question 8g: 'The Irish language belongs to all the people in NI' (%)

<i>Level of ability</i>	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
<i>Young people 16–18</i>					
Lowest	3	1	3	7	4
Lower	–	1	1	4	5
Average	2	1	4	6	19
Higher	2	1	3	6	16
Highest	1	1	1	1	7
<i>Adults >18</i>					
Lowest	10	2	3	5	13
Lower	–	2	1	3	13
Average	–	–	1	3	10
Higher	–	–	1	2	14
Highest	2	2	–	–	13

Table 6.39 Levels of ability in speaking Irish by responses to question 8m: 'In order to be truly Irish one must be able to speak Irish' (%)

<i>Level of ability</i>	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
<i>Young people 16–18</i>					
Lowest	8	2	2	3	4
Lower	6	1	3	–	1
Average	6	8	8	7	3
Higher	9	4	5	7	3
Highest	2	1	1	4	2
<i>Adults >18</i>					
Lowest	10	7	7	7	4
Lower	8	4	7	1	–
Average	5	1	1	5	1
Higher	5	1	8	1	–
Highest	5	–	7	–	5

forthcoming, for a detailed articulation of relationships between gender and the Irish language in the region). Most Irish-speakers saw that language was an important feature of their cultural identity (Table 6.40), but again the data on levels of ability in Irish show that those who claimed only the lowest levels of ability were much less convinced of the significance of the language in this respect (Table 6.41).

Table 6.40 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8h: 'The Irish language is an important part of my heritage' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	14	3	11	9	63
Adult Irish-speakers	15	5	5	11	64

Table 6.41 Levels of ability in speaking Irish by responses to question 8h: 'The Irish language is an important part of my heritage' (%)

<i>Level of ability</i>	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
<i>Young people 16–18</i>					
Lowest	7	–	7	2	4
Lower	1	1	1	2	6
Average	2	1	3	2	23
Higher	3	–	–	2	22
Highest	1	1	–	–	9
<i>Adults >18</i>					
Lowest	10	2	5	5	11
Lower	2	–	–	2	16
Average	–	–	–	–	15
Higher	–	–	–	3	13
Highest	3	2	–	–	11

In the Mac Giolla Chríost survey perceptions regarding the instrumentality of the Irish language were modest among Irish-speakers, although the adults clearly held the potential usefulness of the language with regard to employment in higher regard than did young Irish-speakers (Table 6.42). Perceptions of the instrumentality of the Irish language surprised the authors of the Euromosaic report in that they were higher than they had anticipated. Some 21 per cent of respondents claimed that the ability to speak Irish was essential to their work, and a further 20 per cent claimed that it was useful to be able to speak Irish in their work. Also, despite the quite misleading interpretation offered in the report, most respondents (57 per cent) felt that the Irish language was not a dying language and disagreed in large proportions with assertions that the language was not modern (51 per cent), that it was not for the modern world (79 per cent), and that it was not for science or business (66 per cent). While most

Table 6.42 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8i: 'Irish is less useful for jobs than other languages' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	16	20	29	18	17
Adult Irish-speakers	27	1	27	22	23

respondents (58 per cent) did not consider Irish to be 'necessary for social mobility', considering the use of the word 'necessary' it is surprising that the figure was not higher; use of 'advantageous' or 'useful' would have been more revealing. In this respect it is worth noting that most respondents (81 per cent) did not feel that Irish was indicative of a low class. The perceived relevance of the Irish language to society as a whole in NI, from the point of view of Irish-speakers, is to be seen from the Mac Giolla Chríost survey in which the overwhelming majority of Irish-speakers asserted that the language should be on the curriculum of all schools in the region (Table 6.43).

Conclusions

The Irish language in NI has undergone a limited revival during the last quarter of the twentieth century. The Irish-speaking population may be traced, but, due to the relative paucity of available data, only in broad outline form. Only with further research, including the analysis of the 2001 Census results, will a fuller understanding be possible. From the extant data it would appear to be the case that the Irish-speaking population in NI will continue to be small in size and fragmented in its geographic distribution for the foreseeable future. Acquisition of the Irish language will continue to depend upon the educational system rather than inter-generational transmission within family units. At present, language use is

Table 6.43 Irish-speakers by responses to question 8i: 'The Irish language should be taught in all schools in NI' (%)

	<i>Level of agreement</i>				
	<i>Very strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Very strongly agree</i>
Young Irish-speakers	10	7	19	19	45
Adult Irish-speakers	11	6	17	15	51

largely confined to a close-knit and familiar network of Irish-speakers. The use of the language beyond private domains is very limited indeed. That said, the place of the Irish language in the emerging institutional landscape in NI has the potential to modify the status and instrumental value of the language favourably; this, in turn, is likely to impact upon language practices beyond private domains. Attitudes towards the Irish language in the region are complex and are cross-cut by a range of factors, many of which digress from concepts of the language which are largely grounded in inadequately informed socio-political rhetoric. In general terms it should be underlined that while there exists broad agreement on the value of the Irish language to society as a whole in NI, it is also true to say that there are very substantial levels of concern regarding the perceived over-politicisation of language issues.

Part III

Discourse

7 New directions

Introduction

Moving beyond the impasse on language policy and planning identified in 'Contemporary Geographies' requires that the complexity of relationships between the state(s) in Ireland, local Irish language communities and individual Irish-speakers with regard to their various roles, expectations and rights is better understood (Williams, 1988: 294–5). In order that this might be achieved, the theme of citizenship and language equality and rights is examined in relation to the Irish language in Ireland as a whole. A number of significant changes with regard to Irish language policy and planning in the Republic of Ireland are identified. This includes a new place for the Irish language in the statutory regime and the enactment of legislation for the practical implementation of the constitutional commitments to the Irish language as the national and first official language. Other developments relate to the increasing profile of the Irish language in NI, with linguistic diversity as a feature of the recent political agreement and its associated institutions. It is in this context that the shifting nature of the discourse of Irish language policy and planning is traced. This is undertaken in particular with regard to the Gaeltacht as a geographical and statutory space, as well as the sense of place that is the Gaeltacht. Thus, the existence of sustainable Irish-speaking communities beyond the Gaeltacht is recognised as a sociological fact that is necessary to the continuity of the Irish language while at the same time inviting the redefinition of the Gaeltacht. Also, reconfigurations of Irish citizenship with regard to the Irish language are shown to comprise both ethnic and civic dimensions. In this sense that fashionable rhetoric which underlines an apparent dichotomy between ethnic and civic nationalism is shown to be much overstated. It is in these contexts – that of minorities, equality and rights; and, that regarding the sustainability of the Gaeltacht – where the most significant tensions for Irish language policy and planning are currently identified and the prospects for their resolution are measured throughout the chapters of this 'Discourse'.

Civic and ethnic nationalism

In the late 1980s Tovey noted the emergence of a sense of Irishness that was increasingly defined in terms of citizenship instead of ethnicity:

In the 1950s 'Irishness' could still be defined in terms of ethnic givens – loyalty to religion and language, family and place. By the 1980s, a conception of Irish identity is emerging which defines this in terms of citizenship rather than ethnicity, and which pays at least lip service to the idea of a culturally plural society ... What 'pluralism' has come to mean, however, is not so much safeguarding the rights of cultural minorities as resisting the use of state institutions by traditionally powerful groups to impose a homogeneous conception of Irishness on society as a whole.

(Tovey, 1988: 56)

And according to Tovey, the implications of this for the Irish language and for Bord na Gaeilge were as follows: 'One of the major tasks of the new agency would be the formulation of a new political vocabulary within which its own interventions on behalf of Irish could be legitimated' (Tovey, 1988: 56). In parallel to this shift from the ethnic to the civic Tovey identified another, related, potential shift towards language equality and language rights. Underlining the increasing salience of the matter of constitutionally and legally defined rights during the second half of the 1980s she noted that the policy approach adopted by Bord na Gaeilge with regard to language choice and the state provision of services was not far removed from a position that the state must act as the guarantor of rights to services. In the case of the Irish language such rights could only be construed in terms of minority rights and, as Tovey pointed out (1988: 67), the association of minority rights to the national and first official language would be laden with paradoxes, most of which would be challenging for the traditional advocates of the cause of the Irish language. Tovey also identified a considerable dilemma for Bord na Gaeilge in that, on the one hand, public spending on the Irish language could be justified on the basis of a sense of a broad, national consensus defined by widespread public support for the place of the Irish language in Irish society while, on the other hand, reconfiguring the nature of the public discourse on the Irish language and its function in Irish society in terms of minority rights would have the potential to enable Bord na Gaeilge to gain the freedom of movement necessary to engage with the institutionalised inequalities of power that condemn the Irish language to passive and totemic roles. For example:

The dilemma of Bord na Gaeilge is that it has constantly justified its existence on the grounds of broad public support for Irish and as a

result has only been able to act in ways which will not endanger that broad support. To redefine itself as the agency of a minority group, to recognize and attack existing linguistic power structures in Irish society, might free its capacities for innovative and decisive action but rob it of much of its rationale as an agency of the state.

(Tovey, 1988: 67)

In a seminar paper presented by Dónal Ó Riagáin at Trinity College in Dublin in 1991 some of the issues raised in outline form by Tovey were given some flesh. Among various issues the enactment of an Official Languages Act was identified as necessary in order to define and make practicable the rights associated with the constitutional status of the Irish language:

An Official Languages Act in Ireland would copperfasten the rights of citizens to use either Irish or English in all domains of life and would guarantee that the state would make available, with equal facility and access all public services in both official languages.

(Ó Riagáin, 1991: 1)

The shift in 'political vocabulary' that this continuum of citizenship, equality and rights represents is reinforced by Dónal Ó Riagáin in the section on Irish language policy in NI. Here references to 'attempts by extremists to hijack the Irish language in Northern Ireland and to make it part of their ultra-nationalist baggage' is contrasted with 'acceptance of diversity and the right of people to be different and to maintain their own linguistic, religious and cultural traditions' (Ó Riagáin, 1991: 6). Responding to the apparent change in the nature of the language movement in the Republic of Ireland Mac Póilin, director of NI-based *Ultach* Trust, cast doubt upon its depth:

The cluster of new formulations now emerging around the language issue tend to be based, less on the essentialist definitions derived ultimately from nationalist ideology, but rather on a kind of non-dogmatic cultural ecology-cultural continuity, a source of personal enrichment, maintenance of the richest possible range of cultural resources, the validity and value of minority identities . . . this shift in the revivalist ideology may sometimes be a rationalisation of nationalism which dare not speak its name.

(Mac Póilin, 1996: 158)

Thus, Mac Póilin is arguing that the new 'political vocabulary' is not in fact new at all.

In order that some clarity is brought to bear on the nature of the discourse it is necessary to work through the interrelationships between the

ethnic and the civic dimensions to identity which are apparent in it. The dichotomy between ethnic and civic forms of nationalism identified by some commentators (e.g. Breton, 1988; Brubaker, 1992, 1996; McCrone, 1998) is overstated. According to Smith (1995), the modern nation-state is an ethnic as well as civic construct:

[M]odern nations are simultaneously and necessarily ethnic. In relation to the national state, the individual is a citizen with civic rights and duties, and receives the benefits of modernity through the medium of an impersonal, and impartial, bureaucracy. Hence the nationalism of the state is bureaucratic as well as civic . . . However, in relation to the ethnic community or 'the people', individuals are members with ties and affinities based on history and vernacular culture and for that reason are accorded the rights of citizenship (and the benefits of modernity) of the national state that represents, contains and protects the community. Hence the nationalism of the national community, of the territorial community of history and culture, is popular as well as ethnic . . . The nation . . . represents a sometimes uneasy but necessary symbiosis of ethnic and civic elements.

(Smith, 1995: 99–100)

The implication of this interlock of the ethnic and the civic for language in society is that the modern nation-state is predisposed to the elevation of a single language in the interests of cultural and bureaucratic cohesion. As Giddens puts it:

Nationalism is the cultural sensibility of sovereignty, the concomitant of the co-ordination of administrative power within the bounded nation-state. With the coming of the nation-state, states have an administrative and territorially ordered unity which they did not possess before. This unity cannot be purely administrative however, because the very co-ordination of activities involved presumes elements of cultural homogeneity. The extension of communication cannot occur without the 'conceptual' involvement of the whole community as a knowledgeable citizenry. A nation-state is a 'conceptual community' in a way in which traditional states were not. The sharing of a common language, and a common symbolic historicity, are the most thorough-going ways of achieving this.

(Giddens, 1985: 219)

In this way a discourse on language equality and language rights is not sustained by the identification of a dichotomy between ethnic and civic identity. Rather, it is because of the interlock between the ethnic and the civic and the predisposition of the modern nation-state to be assimilative of minority groups and cultures that the framing of such a discourse is necessary.

Citizenship, language equality and language rights in Northern Ireland

A major stimulus in the further development of the equality and rights agenda has been the peace process and subsequent political agreement that unfolded in NI during the second half of the 1990s. At an early stage in this process the Irish language was identified by some as a 'litmus test for equality' (O'Reilly, 1996). In this context O'Reilly (1999) identifies the use of three separate discursive strategies by the different institutions, organisations and individuals in relation to the Irish language in the region. Central to the three strategies, respectively, are notions of decolonisation, of cultural identity and of rights. The discourse of decolonisation, in which the revival of the Irish language is understood as a project which is central to the post-colonial recovery of Irish national identity, is most closely associated with the nationalist and republican political party Sinn Féin and it provides very little common ground with which to readily engage others on language issues. The discourse of cultural identity, in which the Irish language is understood as a feature of Irish cultural identity in the context of a culturally plural society, has been deployed by many Irish language organisations, state funding agencies and the British government. As such it has allowed for the partial institutionalisation of the Irish language in NI in the period prior to the political agreement reached in 1998, as is reflected in UK government-funded bodies like the Cultural Traditions Group and Ultach Trust. The third discourse, that of rights, in which Irish-speakers are identified as a minority group with certain rights under national, European and international law, was not a feature of the public transcript of the British government during the 1990s, although it was common to many of the advocates of the Irish language.

The discursive strategies may be grounded through reference to some insights drawn from the empirical data relating to the sociology of the Irish language in NI. For example, the historical fact of the segmented cultural division of labour in Ireland (Hechter, 1975) and the inimical attitude of the Unionist-dominated Stormont government to the Irish language in NI (Andrews, 1997) are major factors in shaping the contemporary condition of the language in the region. In the light of this the preponderance of Irish-speakers in certain of the higher socio-economic classes is a phenomenon of significance. This would indicate that the language, despite perceptions (especially amongst Protestants and young non-Irish-speakers according to the results of this study), possesses some instrumental value. The over-representation of Irish-speakers in the very lowest socio-economic class, as well, suggests a polarity of experience within the Irish-speaking community. Although this polarity of experience does not appear to inform negative perceptions of the instrumentality of the Irish language, it appears to be the case that perceptions of linguistic instrumentality

are cross-cut by socio-economic status. It is in the lower and in the top socio-economic classes that the most affirmative responses to the instrumentality of the language are to be found. The results also show that adult females are significantly more persuaded of the instrumentality of Irish than are their male peers. Gender appears to be a factor of wider significance in understanding the nature of the Irish-speaking community in the region. The greater representation of females than males in this survey reflects a pattern noted in the 1991 Census data that females are more likely to be actively engaged in language matters than are males. The greater involvement of females in the language will be critical in strengthening the reproduction of the language in the domain of the home. The results of this survey also suggested the females were generally more optimistic regarding the future prospects of the language and were keener to see greater levels of government intervention in the field and a more substantial presence for the language in the education system. Adult females were also more prepared to see the further politicisation of language issues. A further issue is the low level of inter-marriage between Catholics and Protestants in NI. This phenomenon is an important factor in preventing greater levels of inter-group empathy in the region (Whyte, 1986) and is also another contributory factor to the more limited development of the Irish language among Protestants; the results of the survey show that the inter-generational transference of the language as the mother tongue in NI exists to some extent among Catholics but not among Protestants.

The two main ethnic groups in NI, the Irish and the British, can be distinguished because of their specific cultural traditions. Despite differences in ethnocultural patterns, the social distance between the two groups, as understood by Haarmann (1986: 14), is not strong in some key areas – and the most important of these is the Irish language. The historical overview, which comprised the opening section of this study, as well as the results of this survey, shows that many from various groups positively engaged with the language in the past and that many from the two ethnic groups make positive identifications with the language today. The Irish language is an important vehicle for cultural exchange in interethnic contact in NI. The promotion of the interests of the Irish language and of the Irish-speaking community requires that the cultural and political organisations which take such a role upon themselves be informed by the full range of identifications which are made with the language. The *ausbau* status of the Irish language is also of some relevance in this context as some Unionists are attracted to the Ulster dialect of the language. In the political affairs programme *Let's Talk* (broadcast on 23 June 1998, BBC2 NI) the current leader of the UUP, David Trimble, made clear his preference for the promotion of the Ulster dialect of Irish by those involved in the Irish language movement. He did so, presumably, because this reinforces a view of the particular nature of Ulster as distinct from the rest of Ireland. The

management of the identity of the Ulster form of Irish is a key task. This might include promotional and/or educational campaigns or perhaps the production of teaching materials, especially for adult learners of Irish, which are in the Ulster dialect and reflect the plural identity of Ulster and NI.

Haarmann (1986: 26) points out that the psychological variables which effect group behaviour can only be detected indirectly. Factors of this nature and their potential influence can be read in relation to the results of this survey regarding issues of attitude and in particular the perceptions of ethnic group ownership of the Irish language. The results show that attitudes towards this issue are immensely complex. According to Irish nationalist rhetoric the language is central to definitions of being Irish. Attitudes towards the language among unionist British identifiers are also filtered through various categorisations and identifications which, for many of them, are grounded in assumptions which conform with traditional Irish nationalist views on the language. Yet the majority of the respondents in the survey, including among Irish-speakers, did not regard being Irish-speaking as constituting an enhanced sense of being Irish. In some contexts this might be seen as something which weakens the vitality of a language, but in the immediate post-conflict situation in NI this is a potentially useful feature of the language. Too close an identification with a particular ethnic group alienates members of other ethnic groups from the language. It is a strength of the language that it authenticates a range of senses of group identity in NI, albeit differentially. This could be nurtured. The maintenance of the language should be seen as a measure of the vigour of the new forms of non-inimical ethnic interaction. Exceptionally, two sections of the survey population, adult females and Irish-speakers claiming the highest levels of ability in the language, were more likely than any other section to assert the view that speaking Irish made one more Irish. The ethnopsychological factors implicated in the dynamics of interethnic group relations in this study are informed in part by a very public discourse on language–identity relationships, which conforms to the traditional socio-political rhetoric in NI; but, at a deeper level, a very significant range of nuances in attitude which confound the socio-political stereotypes of this discourse may be discerned.

The political agreement of 1998 caused a further substantial shift in the evolution of these discursive strategies with the result that rights discourse became foregrounded in both NI and the Republic of Ireland. In the section entitled ‘Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity’ in ‘The Agreement’ (Northern Ireland Office [NIO], 1998), concerns with regard to language issues are formally addressed in the political settlement of 1998. In the body of the text it states:

All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern

Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.

(NIO, 1998: Clause 3)

Clause 4 indicates that it was the view of the British government that the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages ('the European Charter') would provide the means for the practical realisation of a series of commitments laid out in 'The Agreement' with regard to education, public administration and the broadcast media:

In the context of active consideration currently being given to the UK signing the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the British Government will in particular in relation to the Irish language, where appropriate and where people so desire it:

- Take resolute action to promote the language;
- Facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life where there is appropriate demand;
- Seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language;
- Make provision for liaising with the Irish language community, representing their views to public authorities and investigating complaints;
- Place a statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education in line with current provision in integrated education;
- Explore urgently with the relevant British authorities, and in co-operation with the Irish broadcasting authorities, the scope for achieving more widespread availability of *Teilifis na Gaeilge* in Northern Ireland;
- Seek more effective ways to encourage and provide financial support for Irish language film and television production in Northern Ireland; and
- Encourage the parties to secure that this commitment will be sustained by a new Assembly in a way which takes account of the desires and sensitivities of the community.

(NIO, 1998: Clause 4)

These commitments have the potential to elevate the status of the Irish language, but the critical conditions here relate to defining that which is appropriate and in identifying the desires and sensitivities of people and the community. Also, it is obvious that the emergent institutional frame-

work associated with the 'new Assembly' would be of central importance to the prospects of the Irish language in NI in the short to medium term.

The translation of the commitments to the Irish language in the articles of the political agreement in NI into policy and practice emerged as an issue of considerable political jousting in the region. In 2000 David Trimble of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) described language matters as 'a political battleground'. The pertinent section of his speech to the party conference runs as follows: 'Michael McGimpsey [Minister in the NI Assembly with responsibility for linguistic diversity] knows that culture is going to be a political battleground. He will ensure fair play for our Scots and English heritage' (reported in the *Irish Times*, 7 October 2000). Mac Póilin (1998), writing in the period immediately following the signing of 'The Agreement' and prior to the drawing together of 'The Implementation Bodies Agreement', was concerned that the Irish language would be drawn into the political landscape in such a way that it would serve merely to reinforce traditional political tensions. The potential for the specific translation of the broader socio-political conflict in the region into domains of culture was previously highlighted by Miller in 1994. He noted the origins of such a shift in the late 1980s in relation to the work of the Community Relations Council. Summarising his line of argument very briefly, it appeared that the simple structuring of core cultural values in the institutional framework for the two main cultural traditions in NI would serve merely to reinforce the political divide as political representatives of the two traditions set crude measures of government support for their communities through the support given to project bids from cultural activists within their electorate. The solution, as Miller saw it, lay in addressing issues of power: 'In the community relations approach all cultures are equal; in reality, some cultures are more equal than others' (Miller, 1994: 76). In this way simplistic readings of parity of esteem may be side-stepped and the Irish language becomes more than a mere litmus test for absolute and essentialist ethnic equalities.

The discussion can be moved further beyond theory and more deeply into matters of application through a close analysis of the nascent institutional framework in NI. Under 'The Implementation Bodies Agreement' (NIO, 1999) a cross-border implementation body for language, known as The North-South Language Body – in Irish, An Foras Teanga, in Ulster-Scots, Tha Boord o Leid – was established. Two separate parts of this body, in a consociational coupling, have the function of serving the interests of the Irish language and the Ulster-Scots language. The agency which serves the interests of the Irish language is known as Foras na Gaeilge. The remit for the Irish language includes the promotion of the language in general, encouraging, facilitating and advising upon the use of the language in private and public domains, supporting Irish-medium education and undertaking research and the development of corpus status. This is clearly set in the context of Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority

Languages. The remit for Ulster-Scots is much narrower, being confined to the 'promotion of greater awareness of the use of Ullans and of Ulster-Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island' (NIO, 1999: Part 5). The necessity of such action is reflected in the low status of Ulster-Scots and in the ambiguity surrounding its status as a distinct form of language at all (see, for example, Mac Póilin, 'The Linguistic Status of Ulster Scots', Submission to the City Hall, Belfast, 27 May 1998). This has remained the case despite activity to promote the language, including the publication of an Ulster dialect dictionary (Macafee, 1996) and the occasional populist piece in Unionist newspapers such as the article by Clifford Smyth optimistically entitled 'Tartan New Wave' which appeared in the *Belfast Telegraph* on 28 July 2000.

The section of the act entitled 'Exercise of Functions and Structures' is critical in understanding the dynamics of An Foras Teanga. Accordingly, two distinct agencies of the body will service the needs of the two languages. Sixteen members with a perceived interest in the Irish language will be appointed to the board of An Foras Teanga by the North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC), the body with overall responsibility for the range of cross-border implementation bodies. These members will exercise the functions of the Irish language agency, and a chairperson for the agency will be appointed by the NSMC from their number. The other eight members of the board of An Foras Teanga will be similarly appointed, in this case due to their perceived interest in the affairs of Ulster-Scots. These eight members will include a chairperson for the Ulster-Scots agency. The two chairpersons will serve as joint chairpersons of An Foras Teanga. The institutional suture in which the two languages find themselves may well engender greater co-operation between representatives of the two languages and constrain the potential for competition between these groups, thereby decreasing the vulnerability of both of the languages to inimical political interest. Favell and Martiniello, in a discussion of the governance of Brussels, highlight some of the possibilities in such systems. The inherent advantage of consociationalism is described as follows:

Whilst the consociational elements of Belgian politics perpetuate a situation of permanent 'crisis' and potential gridlock between two rival linguistic communities, it also ensures that progress is only made at the mutual benefit of both parties and is never zero-sum.

(Favell and Martiniello, 1999: 9–10)

Despite substantial political difficulties in the intervening period, both the British and the Irish governments reaffirmed their commitment to the Irish language with regard to 'Rights, Equality, Identity and Community' in their 'Joint Declaration' of 2003. Under Paragraph 30 it is noted: 'The British Government will continue to discharge all its commitments under the Agreement in respect of the Irish language.' The realisation of some of

these commitments included the signing of the European Charter in March 2000 (in force by July 2001) by the British government. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in the administration in NI (DCALNI) was identified as the lead body on the task of implementing the European Charter. It is in this role that DCALNI has issued guidance (in draft form in January 2004) for public bodies on meeting the UK government commitments in respect of the European Charter. DCALNI communicate no sense of mission nor declare any aims with regard to policy on the Irish language. Indeed, the emphasis on 'UK government commitments', as opposed to any engagement by the administration in NI, may be regarded as an indication that the Irish language is undergoing a process of institutionalisation on the basis of legitimisation at UK state level but in the absence of legitimisation at a local level within NI. The sense of legitimisation is crucial to language status (May, 2001: 150).

Through the signing of the European Charter and the recognition of the Irish language with respect to Part III, a number of commitments were made with regard to Irish in the areas of education, media, public administration, judicial authorities, cultural, social and economic activities, and transfrontier exchanges. The Code of Courtesy included in the guidance indicates those areas in which DCALNI anticipates greatest context – the use of Irish language versions of personal names and addresses, and the exercise of language choice in face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and letters. With regard to the Irish language in relation to questions of citizenship, equality and rights it is noted in the guidance provided by DCALNI that 'the Charter does not establish any individual or collective rights for the speakers of regional or minority languages' and that the purpose of the European Charter is 'cultural' (DCALNI, 2004: 3). However, it is also noted that the European Charter 'commits the UK government to ensure that authorities, organisations and persons concerned are informed of *the rights and duties* [my italics] established by the Charter' (DCALNI, 2004: 5).

Elsewhere in the 'Joint Declaration', under the section entitled 'Rights, Equality, Identity and Community', the two governments point out that a number of important steps were taken during this intervening period. These included the setting up of the NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC), established by legislation in 1998. This body was charged with the task of advising upon the creation of a Bill of Rights for NI, and it is clear that language issues are important. For example, its consultative document of 2001 featured a clause specific to language rights, as follows (NIHRC, 2001):

Clause 13. Language Rights

- 1 Everyone has the right to use his or her own language for private purposes and all languages, dialects and other forms of communication are entitled to respect.

- 2 Everyone has the right to communicate with any public body through an interpreter, translator or facilitator when this is necessary for the purposes of accessing, in a language that he or she understands, information or services essential to his or her life, health, security or enjoyment of other essential services.
- 3 The State shall make suitable provision for assisting communication between members of different linguistic communities.
- 4 In relation to the Irish language and Ulster-Scots, legislation shall be introduced to implement the commitments made under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.
- 5 Without prejudice to the foregoing provisions, legislation shall be introduced to ensure for members of all linguistic communities, where there is sufficient demand, the following rights in respect of their language or dialect:
 - a The promotion of conditions necessary to maintain and develop it;
 - b The right to use it in dealings with public bodies;
 - c The right to use one's name in it and to be officially recognised under it;
 - d The right to display signs and other information in it;
 - e The right to display local street and other place names in it;
 - f The right to learn it and to be educated in and through it.

The legal recognition of language rights would be a substantial step forwards as the Irish language in the public domain and in the workplace in particular has previously been a matter of considerable friction (e.g. Mac Giolla Chríost, 2000; Mac Giolla Chríost and Aitchison, 1998). According to Ruane and Todd (1996: 194–5, 202–3) the contestation of public space in the most general terms is deeply embedded in NI. They suggest that the historical experiences of conquest and colonisation have submerged native Irish cultural signifiers. For example, place-names once in the Irish language are now Anglicised and because of this submergence Irish nationalists are obliged to excavate, metaphorically, the cultural landscape in order to trace their sense of national identity in its structure and symbols. Unionists, they contend, are determined that the public sphere appears and feels British and that this includes, among other things, the exclusion of the Irish language. In the second half of the 1990s a few cases were held by some to demonstrate that the Irish language functions in the public sphere to discriminate against members of the community in NI from Unionist and Protestant backgrounds (Capita Management Consultants, 1997; Fair Employment Commission, press release, 19 August 1997). As a result the Irish language fell foul of the Fair Employment (NI) Act 1989. It was argued that on encountering signs in Irish in public places some indi-

viduals felt uncomfortable to the extent that they experienced a 'chill factor'. This term was defined by the Fair Employment Code of Practice as a 'problem of attitude' whereby individuals from certain backgrounds are discouraged or even prevented from seeking or gaining employment with a company that appears to be associated with a particular form of religious or political identity which they do not share (Department of Economic Development [DED], 1989: 2). The particular case of bilingual English–Irish signage in the Students' Union building in the Queen's University, Belfast arose from the coincidence of the under-representation of Protestants on the workforce within the Students' Union and the public presence of Irish language signs in the Students' Union building. Under the Fair Employment in Northern Ireland Code of Practice 1989 certain symbols and emblems can and do cause offence, amounting to actual discrimination on the grounds of religious belief and/or political opinion. It is in this respect, as a symbol of religious belief and/or political opinion, that the presence of the Irish language in public domains was believed to be discriminatory.

Some limited research (Scullion, 1999) indicates something of the nature of this problem of attitudes which underlies this issue. Employees from a range of socio-economic classes and from across the community as a whole were surveyed in their workplaces in the Dungannon area of Northern Ireland in the period immediately following the elections to the NI Assembly. In very general terms the data suggest a broad level of support for increased use of the Irish language in various fields within the public domain throughout NI. Among Protestant respondents support is high, at over 63 per cent, for bilingual (English–Irish) facilities which do not have an immediate and clear visual impact, such as application forms etc. This support declines to 30 per cent with regard to bilingualism of a greater public profile, such as signage in public places. Only a small minority of Protestant respondents, 13 per cent, were in favour of significant levels of bilingualism within their workplace. Levels of support for the same were much higher in all cases among the Catholics surveyed. Also according to the survey attitudes towards the Irish language amongst Protestants are cross-cut by socio-economic factors. Protestants at the top and bottom ends of the socio-economic scale are very much closer to their Catholic peers in their attitudes towards the language. The greatest and sharpest division, tending towards polarisation, occurs among respondents with managerial and skilled occupations and also those educated to GCE A-level or its equivalent (NI Census Highest Academic Qualification level 3). This division is at its clearest in the 34–41 age group. The small size of this survey (71 questionnaires) limits the broader significance of the data, but they are none the less suggestive of some of the complexity of attitudes towards the Irish language. Read solely as a symbol of nationalist political ideology (e.g. O'Reilly, 1996) the language is rendered vulnerable to the tensions which underscore the divisions within society in NI and are at the heart of cases of discrimination on the grounds of religious belief

and political opinion. The results of this research suggest that the Irish language merits, *prima facie*, a more inclusive reading in relation to such issues. With regard to the delivery of the commitments to the Irish language under the European Charter, it is likely that this would be frustrated were the Fair Employment (NI) Act 1989 to be continued to be deployed in this manner when clearly this piece of legislation is not wholly adequate for dealing with such language issues in an appropriately sophisticated manner.

The successful implementation of Irish language policy requires the facilitating of linguistic pluralism within harmonious working environments, and a more inclusive and plural public space is made more likely by the recognition of specific language rights. While it is the view of DCALNI that the European Charter does not confer any specific language rights the NIHRC notes in 'The Agreement' under the section entitled 'Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity' that the UK government committed to 'a recognition of linguistic diversity coupled with specific commitments for the protection and promotion of the Irish language', and that associated with that was the commitment of both the UK government and the government of the Republic of Ireland to 'the protection of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights' and that thereby the interrelationship between economic, social and cultural rights, on the one hand, and civil and political rights, on the other hand, was identified in 'The Agreement' (NIHRC, 2002: Section 7). This serves to underline the tension inherent to the view that the European Charter is not relevant to the recognition of language rights as the context in which it is set in 'The Agreement' is otherwise suggestive. Tension in the area of rights and their embedding in the post-bellum institutions and policy processes may be discerned. For example, in the same submission the NIHRC contend:

One of our [NIHRC] statutory functions is precisely that of providing human rights assessments, on request or at our discretion, in relation to legislation that has effect in Northern Ireland. We are also routinely consulted on a very wide range of policy initiatives, and endeavour to respond in every instance where we have identified human rights concerns. The Committee should, however, note that we are not consulted on *all* legislation, even where there are clear human rights concerns, and when we do make recommendations they are much more often than not disregarded.

(Section 5, Paragraph h)

For an authoritative assessment of the human rights compliance of legislation and policy it is at least desirable that reference of such initiatives be made by the executive or legislature to an appropriately empowered and resourced independent human rights institution.

(Section 5, Paragraph i)

Clearly there are some substantial challenges to be met with regard to embedding equality and rights agenda more generally in policy processes. With regard to language, according to the NIHRC the approach so far adopted with regard to the European Charter is very restrained. For example, in a submission of April 2002 to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights the NIHRC underlines the relevance of the European Charter to language rights but is critical of the level of commitment to the European Charter:

The formal status of Irish has also improved with the United Kingdom's application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages ... However, the Committee should note that although the UK has identified 36 Charter paragraphs which it intends to apply to Irish (compared with 59 for Welsh), these are (where options are available within the Charter framework) the minimal provisions in each area, and even then they have not been implemented in full.

(Section 5, Paragraph e)

With regard to specific language rights in the area of education, one of the main thrusts of the UK government commitments to the Irish language in 'The Agreement', NIHRC signposted their concerns in this area:

The international human rights standards require that parents should be free to send their children to schools that are in conformity with their own beliefs, and this Commission therefore believes that public funding should be made available on an equitable basis to schools in all sectors. Equitable in this context does not mean equal: there should be additional funding where required to target social need, to redress the historic underfunding of many schools, and to meet the start-up costs of new schools, for example in integrated and Irish-medium education (the main 'minority' sectors). We would wish to see a situation where every family that wanted to avail of integrated or Irish-medium education had the right and the freedom to do so.

(Section 5, Paragraph f)

Language equality and rights has further developed as a discursive strategy among advocates of the Irish language in NI during this period. The evidence from the NIHRC consultative process of 2001 on a Bill of Rights indicates as much (see Section 12 on Language Rights). In general terms, the range of views are summarised as follows:

In terms of scope, the main tension seems to be between on the one hand adequate protection for what is thought 'particular to Northern

Ireland', and for disadvantaged groups (as highlighted by language and human rights NGOs) and on the other hand the logistics of implementing such rights (as mentioned in submissions from state controlled bodies and two political parties). In relation to identity, there is also friction between an approach that treats all languages the same and one that recognises special protection for the dominant cultural or linguistic communities.

(NIHRC, 2001: 76)

According to the NIHRC report many of the submissions on the Irish language argue for the recognition of legally defined rights: 'These submissions maintain that the Irish language is indigenous to Northern Ireland and should therefore have protection that reflects international standards, together with a state duty to implement protective legislation' (NIHRC, 2001: 76). It is also noted that the minority opposed to the granting of language rights formulated their objections on the grounds of cost and not on the substantive matter of equality and rights: 'Their arguments are more concerned with how the government would absorb the cost' (NIHRC, 2001: 76). Some submissions, they note, claim that the implications of the granting of language rights would be 'a financial nightmare' (NIHRC, 2001: 79). The recognition of rights can be costly, but is certainly no more costly than discrimination. On the matter of other languages, negotiating the interlock between the ethnic and the civic in citizenship, as noted earlier, is the key to resolving that tension.

Citizenship, language equality and language rights in the Republic of Ireland

In the Republic of Ireland practical implications of the constitutional status of the Irish language as the national and first official language were tested through the courts on a number of occasions during the 1980s. While the cases of *Helen Ó Murchú v. Registrar of Companies and the Minister for Industry and Commerce* (1988) and of *Antóin Delap v. The Minister of Justice, Ireland and the Attorney General* (1990) were confined to very narrowly defined domains regarding the availability of forms and documentation in the Irish language it is instructive that the state was found wanting in both instances. Also, the evidence from the review of the Irish language in the public services carried out by Bord na Gaeilge in 1995 was that limited progress was being made. For example, the data from the survey show that around 50 per cent of public bodies do not give consideration to skills in the Irish language in the recruitment process (Bord na Gaeilge, 1996: 64, 82), that only four government departments respond in Irish to telephone calls in Irish (Bord na Gaeilge, 1996: 76), that only a minority of organisations stock bilingual stationary at all locations (Bord na Gaeilge, 1996: 82), and that only 15 per cent of the public

organisations that responded to the survey had in place codes of practice for their staff on the use of spoken and written Irish with other bodies and with the public (Bord na Gaeilge, 1996: 99).

By the year 2000 a fresh dynamism was increasingly apparent in the area of Irish language policy, and matters of language equality and rights were central to it. This dynamism included specific commitments to the Irish language under the Education Act 1998 and the Planning and Development Act 2000, as well as the work of 'Treo 2000. Commission to Examine the Role of the Irish Language Voluntary Organisations' and the work of Coimisiún na Gaeltachta (Gaeltacht Commission) 2002. The most substantial outcome of this activity was the passing of an Official Languages Act in 2003, aimed at ensuring the better availability and higher standard of public services in the Irish language. According to the Irish government the Act comprises a number of key features (An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta, 2003). Section 20 of the Act provides for the establishment of the Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeanacha Oifigiúla (Office of the Official Languages Commissioner), charged with the task of supervising and monitoring the implementation of the Act. The Commissioner, known as An Coimisinéir Teanga, will be appointed by the president and, as such, will be independent. An Coimisinéir Teanga will be able to investigate complaints, to pursue statutory investigations and to take legal action against public bodies with respect of their commitments to the Irish language. Under the Act, various public bodies will be required to prepare 'language schemes' through which they will make specific provision for the delivery of services in the Irish language. These will be subject to the approval of the minister and will be renewed on a three-yearly basis. Also, a range of statutory obligations regarding the status of the Irish language in the public sector are identified in the Act. This includes the following:

- The right of any person to use the Irish language before either House of the Oireachtas including any committee thereof;
- Publication of Acts simultaneously in both Irish and English;
- The right of a person to be heard and to use the Irish language in court proceedings;
- The duty of public bodies to reply to correspondence – in writing or by electronic mail – in the language in which that correspondence was written;
- The duty of public bodies to ensure that any communication providing information to the public – in writing or by electronic mail – is in the Irish language only or in the Irish and English languages;
- The duty of public bodies, which are also state bodies, to ensure that certain documents of public interest shall be published in each of the official languages simultaneously;

- Official placenames in Gaeltacht areas being in the Irish language only and equal status being given to the Irish and English language versions of official placenames in other parts of the country. (An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta, 2003: 2–3)

Under the Act, the minister is charged with the power to make regulations governing matters identified as being universally applicable, including oral announcements, signage, stationery and advertisements.

Given the importance attached to the Act by the Irish government it is worth dwelling on a few points. The various contributions of the minister responsible, Éamon Ó Cuív, to the discussion on the floor of the Irish parliament at the second stage of the bill on 22 May 2003 are useful points of departure in this regard (www.irlgov.debates). According to the minister the purpose of the legislation was quite straightforward, being to give practical meaning to the constitutional status of the Irish language as the national and first official language. The absence of legislation defining the implications of that constitutional status was identified by the minister as an obstacle to the practical ownership of the Irish language by public bodies, for example:

Mar thoradh ar an easpa reachtaíochta sin, bhí sé deacair a chur ina luí ar chomhlachtaí Stáit go bhfuil cearta ag saoránaigh na hÉireann i dtaca le soláthar seirbhísí i nGaeilge. [As a result of that lack of legislation, it was difficult to impress upon state bodies that Irish citizens have rights with regard to the provision of services in the Irish language.]

However, the constitutional status of the language was, in itself, a problem. The minister was, at the outset, minded to secure equality for the Irish language and Irish-speakers in relation to public services provision. But, between the drafting of the initial bill – Official Languages (Equality) Bill 2002 – and the presentation of the Act as the Official Languages Act 2003, the matter of equality was identified as a difficulty. The minister formulated the nature of the challenge of equality in the following terms:

Is iad na príomhcheisteanna a bhí romham agus mé ag cur an Bhille seo in eagar ná aitheantas cuí a thabhairt do sheasamh bunreachtúil na Gaeilge mar an príomhtheanga oifigiúil gan aon ghearradh trasna a dhéanamh ná aon bhréagnu a dhéanamh ar an seasamh bunreachtúil sin agus, ag an am céanna, feabhsaithe praiticiúla ar staid lag na Gaeilge sa saol poiblí a bhaint amach, go háirithe ó thaobh seirbhísí poiblí trí Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil. [These are the main questions which were in front of me as I presented the Bill; thus, to give appropriate recognition to the Irish language in its constitutional position as the main official language without interfering with or contradicting that

constitutional position and, at the same time, bring about practical improvements in the weak condition of the Irish language in public life, especially from the point of view of making public services available through Irish.]

Thus, the dilemma appears to have been something of a conundrum in which the Irish language was *de jure* more than equal to the English language as the other official language; but *de facto* the Irish language was, of course, less than equal. That is to say, the Constitution elevates the Irish language to a status that is superior to other languages but that this has had no practical impact due to the lack of legislation which would empower the constitutional position of the Irish language in practical terms. Thus, according to the minister, the notion of equality was removed from the proposed legislation in order that the constitutional position of the language not be compromised:

Bhain ceann acu le húsáid an fhocail ‘comhionannas’ sa Teideal Fada, sa Ghearrtheideal agus in Alt 1 den Bhille i dtaca leis an nGaeilge, ag feachaint d’Airteagal 8 den Bhunreacht. Is í an cheist a bhí anseo ná go raibh se míchuí go labhróidh aon reachtaíocht i dtaobh comhionannais a bhronnadh ar an nGaeilge, ag cuimhneamh gar stádas tosaíochta atá ag an teanga faoi Airteagal 8.1 den Bhunreacht lena bhforáiltear, ‘Is í an Ghaeilge an teanga náisiunta is í an phríomh theanga oifigiúil í. Mé féin a lua an focal ‘comhionannas’ an chéad uair mar gur shíl mé go mbéarfadh sé ar intinn an phobail agus go raibh tuiscint sa lá atá inniu ann ar an tábhachta a bhainneann le comhionannas. Ach, ar ndóigh, glacaim go hiomlán leis an leasú atá déanta agam féin, gurb í an Ghaeilge an príomhtheanga oifigiúil, agus níor mhaith liom baint de sin . . . Is cuma cén chaint a déantar ní féidir le haon reachtaíocht cearta bunreacha a bhaint de dhuine ar bith. Is bun riail dlí é sin. [The use of the word ‘equality’ in the Long Title, the Short Title and in Article 1 of the Bill as regards the Irish language was removed, in the light of Article 8 of the Constitution. The question here is that it was improper for any legislation to speak of conferring equality on the Irish language, recalling that the initial status that applies to the language under Article 8.1 of the Constitution provides that ‘The Irish language is the national language and the main official language’. I, having cited the word ‘equality’ on the first occasion, considered that it would capture the public imagination what with the understanding that there is today of the importance attached to equality. But, of course, I hold fully to the amending that I have made. The Irish language is the main official language and I would not want to diminish that . . . Whatever the chatter, it is not possible for any legislation to deprive anyone of their constitutional rights. That is a basic principle of law.]

During the course of the debate the minister couches the implications of the Act in terms of the rights of Irish-speaking citizens as customers of public services; for example:

Sa gcomhthéacs sin, ba chóir dom a lua gur cheadaigh an Rialtas, i mí Iúil 2000, go nglacfaí le comhionannas na dteangacha oifigiúla mar cheann de thrí phrionsabal maidir le seirbhís chustaiméara fheabhsaithe don tseirbhís phoiblí i gcoitinne. [In that context I ought to mention that the government approved, in July 2000, that the equality of the official languages be embraced as one of three principles regarding customer service improvement for public services generally.]

Bunaithe ar an mbreithiúnas sin, bhí comhairle tugtha dom go bhfuil dualgas ar an Stát urramú do cheart bunreachtúil an tsaoránaigh gach gnó a dhéanamh leis an Stát i nGaeilge, in éagmais aon dlí a fhágann amach go baileach an ceart sin. [Based upon that judgment, I was advised that there is a duty upon the State to make regard to the constitutional right of citizens to conduct all business with the State in Irish, in the absence of any law that sets out exactly that right.]

However, despite the superior constitutional status of the Irish language, it is clear that service-users whose language of choice is Irish may not necessarily enjoy equal rights in practice under law. The minister relates the impact of the Act upon service provision in accordance with language choice in terms of gradual service improvement; for example:

Táim sásta freisin go gcinteoidh an Bille seo, thar an tréimhse tosaigh, soláthar seirbhísí poiblí sa Ghaeilge atá i bhfad níos fearr ó thaobh caighdeáin de agus níos fairsinge o thaobh réimse de, i gcomparaid leis an scéal fíorasach atá ann i lathair na huaire agus go soláthroidh sé meicníocht a bheidh láidir go leor chun ligean domsa, mar Aire, agus do mo chomharbaí, an leibhéal tosaigh sin a fheabhusú de réir a chéile chun soláthar seirbhísí níos mó, céim ar chéim, a chinntiú, chun freastal ar eilimh na ndaoine a úsáideann an Gaeilge mar rogha theanga go minic nó ar bhonn laethuil. [I am satisfied that this Bill secures, beyond the initial period, the provision of public services in Irish that are of a much higher standard and are much broader in range by comparison with the actual state-of-play at present and that it will provide a mechanism that will be robust enough to allow me, as minister, and for my successors, that initial level for gradual improvement and for securing the provision of more services, step by step, and for attending to those people that use the Irish language as their language of choice frequently or on a daily basis.]

It is also the case that the principle focus of the practical implications of the Act is upon Irish-speakers, as customers of public services, who are resident in the Gaeltacht. The minister put it as follows:

Ba mhaith liom anois cúpla focal a rá maidir leis an tagairt don Ghaeltacht sa Bhille seo. I dtosach báire, ba mhaith liom aird an dTeachtaí a dhíriú arís ar na forálacha sa Bhille a mbeidh tionchar díreach, dearfach agus suntasach acu do mhuintir na Gaeltachta go speisialta, ar leibhéal agus ar chaighdeán na seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge a bheidh de dhualgas ar chomhlachtaí poiblí a sholáthar do mhuintir na Gaeltachta. I measc na bhforálacha sin áirím ach go háirithe an ceart atá ag duine in imeachtaí dlíthiúla éisteacht a fháil agus a rogha teanga oifigiúil a úsáid (alt 8); an dualgas atá ar chomhlachtaí poiblí dréacht-scéim reachtúil a ullmhú ina sonrófar na seirbhísí a bheartaíonn an comhlacht a sholáthar trí mheán na Gaeilge amháin (alt 9); an dualgas atá ar chomhlachtaí poiblí, comhfheagras – i scribhínn no leis an bpost leictreonach – i dteanga oifigiúil a fhreagairt sa teanga oifigiúil chéanna (alt 10); an dualgas atá ar chomhlachtaí go gcinnteofar leis an ndr éacht-scéim go bhfuil líon leordhóthanach den fhoireann inniúil sa Ghaeilge agus go gcinnteofar freisin go bhfreastalófar ar na riachtanais áirithe Ghaeilge a bhainnean le seirbhísí a sholáthar sa Ghaeltacht. [I would like to say a couple of words now regarding reference to the Gaeltacht in this Bill. At the outset, I would like to draw the attention of Members again to the directives in the Bill that will influence directly, positively and distinctively the public bodies which provide services to the people of the Gaeltacht. Among the directives, I highlight the right of the individual to a hearing in court proceedings and to use the official language of their choice (Article 8); the duty that is upon public bodies to prepare statutory draft-schemes in which the services provided by the body through the medium of Irish alone are detailed (Article 9); the duty that is upon public bodies to respond to correspondence in an official language – in writing or by e-mail – in the same official language (Article 10); the duty that is upon bodies to ensure, in accordance with the draft-scheme, that there is sufficient complement of staff competent in Irish, and that the particular Irish language requirements are attended to with regard to the provision of services in the Gaeltacht.]

In this way the rights conferred by the Act are largely driven by the principle of territoriality rather than personality. That is to say, the Act can be interpreted as providing for the recognition of language rights in relation to the Gaeltacht as a statutory territorial unit defined by language. And in the main, the rights of Irish-speakers flow largely from their geographical relationship with the state and much less so from their condition as individual speakers of the Irish language who may be resident in any

particular part of the Republic of Ireland. The amendments of the Bill may be read for confirmation of the ascendancy of the principle of territory over personality during redrafting and also of the treatment other than equal with regard to the provision of services in the Irish language. For example, the differences between Article 13 of the Bill and Article 11 of the Act appear to be of particular significance in this regard. According to the Bill public bodies would be required to present draft schemes in which were specified 'the measures the public body proposes to adopt to ensure that a person who wishes to obtain service from the body through either of the official languages is given *equal treatment* [my italics]' (Official Languages [Equality] Bill 2002: Part 3, Article 13), whereas according to the Act public bodies will be required to present draft schemes in which are specified 'the services which the public body proposes to provide – exclusively through the medium of the Irish language, exclusively through the medium of the English language, and through the medium of both the Irish and English languages' (Official Languages Act 2003: Part 3, Article 11). The absence of a legislative commitment to equal treatment may well prove to have practical implications both within and beyond the Gaeltacht. The apparent limitations in the Act with regard to Irish-speakers as customers of public services throughout the Republic Ireland may, perhaps, be understood in the nature of the minister's appeal to non-Irish-speakers. For in seeking out the necessary intermeshing of the ethnic and civic dimensions to the Irish language in the context of the apparatus of the Irish state it is crucial that the citizenry as a whole acquiesce in the process:

One of the aims of the Bill is to strengthen that [concept that Irish language belongs to all citizens] because if we move away from the concept of Irish belonging to all the people, including those who do not know Irish fluently, we will move away from the concept which is essential to what we are about, namely, the role of the Irish language as a badge of nationhood and being a separate people and country. That is important in the context of how we view the Irish language as a people . . . [T]he attraction of the language for me is not as a minority language but as the historic and current first language of this State, mar an chéad teanga oifigiúil [as the first official language]. There are those who for one reason or another are not fluent in Irish, who have the same love of the language and who feel the same ownership of it. One of my main aims is to revert to the situation, from which we were slowly moving away, where in the naming of public bodies Irish was not always a céim síos [a step down].

Thus, the challenge that confronts Irish language policy-makers is brought into sharp focus – that is, to move beyond a tokenistic view of the language as an emblem of national identity and towards the con-

struction of a robust and practically meaningful civic identity for the Irish language.

This challenge relates to the nature of the relationship between the state and the individual with regard to the language, and it is in this relationship that a further dilemma may be noted. The rhetoric of the state shifts between conceiving of the individual as a citizen or as a customer. The fluidity of terminology is significant as it points to contrasting relationships between the state and the individual. The fundamental difference between the client-citizen and the consumer may be clearly illustrated, for example, in relation to the welfare state in the UK. In this context, client-citizens may be understood in Weberian terms as passive recipients of welfare. But that this social citizenship is defined by the 'recognition of social rights, equalities and expectations alongside civil and political rights' (Fergusson and Hughes, 2000: 123). According to the political ideology of social democracy the state and its institutions realise these values of social citizenship, as the state is conceived of as 'a neutral structure capable of allocating resources equitably, under democratic control' (Fergusson and Hughes, 2000: 128). The various welfare services are provided by professionals, subject to systematic and impartial bureaucratic regulation, whose expertise confers an authority to which the user is generally inclined to defer. The role of consumers in the institution of welfare is very different. The consumer is more empowered than the client-citizen as s/he may exercise choice in the welfare marketplace. Under these circumstances the professional is more accountable and open to challenge. In Foucauldian terms this transformation may be viewed as follows – the passivity of the dependent clients is understood in terms of the norms and expectations of the user–professional relationship based upon historical practice, discourse and knowledge, and neither the imagination nor the language exists for doing things differently. In contrast, consumers are ascribed a degree of agency through exercising the power to choose a service or to challenge authority. This leads to increasing diversity, but also to uncertainty. Whether Irish-speakers are defined either as citizens or as customers is very significant for situating the Irish language in the public sector as the former identity is driven by rights, equality and rigidity, and the latter by choice, empowerment and flexibility.

Conclusions

At present, the discourse in both the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland tends towards citizenship, rights and equality, and as the implications of the European Charter and the Official Languages Act work their way through the states and their institutions in both parts of Ireland it is likely that events, cultures and processes of resistance, challenge, negotiation and change will define the condition of the Irish language in this context in the immediate future. However, a crucial distinction can be

drawn between the nature of Irish language policy in the two parts of Ireland in that, in very general terms, the new policy directions tend to reinforce the principle of territoriality in the Republic of Ireland, with a focus on Gaeltacht and its residents, while in the case of NI it is the principle of personality which drives the agenda, with the focus on generic pan-regional legalistic issues. This may emerge as an area of policy tension for those engaged with Irish language issues on an all-Ireland basis as the variegated geography of language rights and language equality comes into sharper focus as the implementation of commitments to the European Charter and the Official Languages Act unfolds. The myriad socio-political relationships between individual, group, society and state in Ireland have the potential to be transformed as a result of the political settlement in NI, and given the current policy activity at a national strategic level in the Republic of Ireland. It is certain that the Irish-speaking community will feel the weight of these changes to the political culture as the range of new institutions are shaped to better reflect the diversity of aspirations and identities in NI and as the institutions of state in the Republic of Ireland take up the challenge posed by the new legislation. This emergent institutional framework will be critical in shaping the status of the Irish language in the immediate future. The all-Ireland language body, An Foras Teanga, will be of central importance in this regard. However, in attempting to achieve overarching language policy and planning goals successfully An Foras Teanga will have to engage with the Irish-speakers and the Irish-speaking community, in all its guises, in the various parts of Ireland. It can be anticipated, therefore, that community-based language planning will shortly appear on the horizon of informed policy-makers, planners and local language *animateurs*.

8 Irish in a global age

Introduction

A number of key issues for the Irish language in its contemporary social context in Ireland can be identified. These relate to the relationship between local, Irish-speaking communities and language planning initiatives, relationships between language and ethnicity in national identity, and the urban geography of the Irish language. It is argued here that given the diffuse nature of the social geography of the Irish language, whether as networks of Irish-speakers in the various parts of Ireland or as fragmented communities dispersed across the various Gaeltacht areas, there is a necessity for intervention that is community-based in terms of moral ownership, agenda-setting and action. A vehicle for language planning activity is suggested, drawn from comparative experiences. It is also pointed out that, in addition to engagement at a community level, it is necessary for the strategic discourse which informs the policy process to engage with a more nuanced understanding of ethnicity and national identity which more accurately reflects the social reality of ethnic identity(-ies) in Ireland. The principal implication of this is a shift from a conception of citizenship in which the Irish language is petrified as a passive totem of Irishness for all towards the acceptance of the language as a dynamic feature of citizenship for Irish-speakers. The third key issue is that of the Irish language in the city. Urban sites are central to much of the social, cultural, economic and political changes which are currently impacting upon Irish society. Developing an understanding of the functioning of the Irish language in Irish cities is identified here as being crucial to the task of planning for the language and its social continuity. In order that such an understanding might begin to emerge, the critical features of the city and potential points of engagement with language are delineated.

Community-based language planning

The Irish-speaking community in Ireland is of a modest size. The results of the 2002 Census in the Republic of Ireland show that the notion of the

Gaeltacht as a linguistically homogeneous and territorially coherent social entity cannot be sustained. For example, the Irish language is used on a daily basis by around 54 per cent of the total resident population of the various Gaeltacht areas taken together (Table 8.1). The total number of daily users of the Irish language within the Gaeltacht is almost half the number of daily users of the Irish language in the Greater Dublin Area (Table 8.2). There are around five times the number of daily users of Irish aged 3–4 years outside of the Gaeltacht than there are daily users of the language in the same age cohort within the Gaeltacht (Table 8.3). Also, it is clear from the 2002 Census data that the education system, not the home, is the primary means of acquisition of the Irish language within the Gaeltacht. Numbers of Irish-speakers and daily users of the language rise sharply at school-going age and this has been the case for some time (Table 8.4), and according to other results the Irish language is not the sole language of the home in just under half of all private households in

Table 8.1 Irish-speakers aged three years and over resident in the Gaeltacht, classified by frequency of use of Irish, Republic of Ireland, 2002

	<i>All Gaeltacht areas</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Less often</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Not stated</i>
3–4 years	1,174	903	110	137	3	21
5–9 years	5,012	3,930	510	414	61	97
10–14 years	6,335	4,657	733	667	158	120
15–19 years	6,233	3,576	818	1,328	390	121
20–24 years	3,969	1,487	415	1,386	613	68
25–34 years	7,380	3,087	755	2,423	983	132
35–44 years	8,466	3,901	932	2,650	804	179
45–54 years	8,545	4,217	911	2,589	640	188
55–64 years	6,117	3,235	659	1,710	371	142
65 years and over	8,926	4,796	861	2,507	492	270
Total	62,157	33,789	6,704	15,811	4,515	1,338

Sources: Republic of Ireland Census 2002; Coimisiún na Gaeltachta 2002).

Table 8.2 Irish-speakers aged three years and over resident in cities, classified by frequency of use of Irish, Republic of Ireland, 2002

<i>City</i>	<i>Total resident Irish-speakers</i>	<i>Total daily users of Irish</i>
Greater Dublin area	349,076	63,825
Cork	83,178	16,080
Galway	31,595	6,009
Limerick	38,339	6,879
Waterford	18,078	3,408

Sources: Republic of Ireland Census 2002; Coimisiún na Gaeltachta 2002).

Table 8.3 Irish-speakers aged three years and over, classified by frequency of use of Irish and age, Republic of Ireland, 2002

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Total Irish-speakers</i>	<i>Daily use of Irish</i>
3–4 years	10,450	5,991
5–9 years	131,016	84,377
10–14 years	191,893	107,957
15–19 years	204,842	68,382
20–24 years	165,520	9,111
25–34 years	237,563	13,727
35–44 years	197,073	15,982
45–54 years	182,187	15,046
55–64 years	119,250	9,304
65 years and over	131,100	9,664
Total	1,570,894	339,541

Sources: Republic of Ireland Census 2002; Coimisiún na Gaeltachta 2002).

Table 8.4 Irish-speakers in the Gaeltacht, classified by age group, Republic of Ireland, 1961–2001

	<i>1961</i>	<i>1971</i>	<i>1981</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>2001</i>
3–4 years	1,944	1,490	1,566	1,117	1,174
5–9 years	6,745	5,334	5,642	5,262	5,012
10–14 years	8,255	6,347	6,485	6,708	6,335
15–19 years	6,104	5,831	5,531	5,901	6,233
20–24 years	2,866	3,215	3,960	3,236	3,969
25–34 years	5,257	4,731	7,259	6,659	7,380
35–44 years	7,198	5,056	5,717	7,431	8,466
45–54 years	8,870	6,633	5,365	5,681	8,545
55–64 years	6,948	7,422	6,284	4,928	6,117
65 years and over	10,088	9,381	10,217	9,546	8,926
Total	64,275	55,440	58,026	56,469	62,157

Sources: Republic of Ireland Census 2002; Coimisiún na Gaeltachta 2002).

the Gaeltacht (Table 8.5). Thus, while several parts of the Gaeltacht have populations with proportions of daily users of the Irish language in excess of 75 per cent (Table 8.6) this should not disguise that fact of the linguistic fragmentation of the Gaeltacht or the significant and diverse presence of the Irish language outside of the Gaeltacht.

In NI the size of the functional Irish-speaking community is much smaller than the total number of Irish-speakers identified in census data. The results of the fieldwork of the author on levels of ability in speaking Irish indicate that approximately 33 per cent of adults and approximately 37 per cent of young people claim better than average ability. If such levels of ability can be taken to mean that such respondents are functional Irish-speakers, and if this survey is taken to be representative of the

Table 8.5 Private households in the Gaeltacht with daily Irish-speakers, classified by number of daily Irish-speakers and number of persons aged 3 years and over in the household, Republic of Ireland, 2002

<i>Number of daily Irish-speakers</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Persons in household</i>					
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6 or more</i>
1	5,884	2,687	1,194	850	672	298	183
2	3,933	–	2,122	606	691	329	185
3	2,086	–	–	1,035	482	367	202
4	1,366	–	–	–	869	286	211
5	822	–	–	–	–	578	244
6 or more	511	–	–	–	–	–	511
Total	14,602	2,687	3,316	2,491	2,714	1,858	1,536

Sources: Republic of Ireland Census 2002; Coimisiún na Gaeltachta 2002).

Table 8.6 Electoral divisions in the Gaeltacht with proportion of daily Irish-speakers in excess of 75 per cent, Republic of Ireland, 1996

<i>Electoral division</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Daily Irish-speakers</i>	<i>Daily Irish-speakers as %</i>
An Turloch, Co. Galway	429	394	91.8
Scainimh, Co. Galway	433	389	89.8
Mín an Chladaigh, Co. Donegal	979	869	88.8
Camus, Co. Galway	270	237	87.8
An Crampán, Co. Galway	1,495	1,302	87.1
Garmna, Co. Galway	883	766	86.7
Cill Chúáin, Co. Kerry	314	269	85.7
Gort an Choirce, Co. Donegal	1,145	969	84.6
Dún Lúiche, Co. Donegal	478	391	81.8
Cill Chuimín, Co. Galway	859	702	81.7
Dún Chaoin, Co. Kerry	113	92	81.4
Leitir Móir, Co. Galway	572	465	81.3
Machaire an Chlochair, Co. Donegal	1,986	1,609	81.0
Abhainn Ghabhla, Co. Galway	240	193	80.4
An Cnoc Buidhe, Co. Galway	614	488	79.5
An Ros, Co. Galway	87	67	77.0
Sailchearnach, Co. Galway	773	592	76.6

Sources: Republic of Ireland Census 2002; Coimisiún na Gaeltachta 2002).

Irish-speakers of NI as a whole, it gives a body of functional Irish-speakers of the order of 40,000 to 45,000, with some 13,000 to 15,000 (around 10 per cent of the census population of Irish-speakers) possessing fluency in the full range of language skills. The analysis of the census data shows that this modest Irish-speaking community is dispersed across NI. Although fragmented, this Irish-speaking community is characterised by a number of emergent cores of Irish-speakers, which can be identified in a number of

locations in the region. The urban centres of Belfast and Derry and the more rural locations of the areas of Dungannon, Magherafelt and Newry and Mourne all contain relatively high concentrations of Irish-speakers, commonly constituting over 30 per cent of the total population in some parts. The ethnic heterogeneity of NI does not facilitate the transcending of this fragmentation as the ethnic mosaic which is NI means that local Irish-speaking communities and networks are largely confined within small, clearly defined socio-political enclaves. The results of the fieldwork of the author also indicate that actual use of the Irish language is limited to closely defined and personally immediate networks of Irish-speakers. Census data regarding the Irish language in the Republic of Ireland show that the language is habitually used by the greater part of the population of the Gaeltacht and that it is also used by a body of Irish-speakers beyond the Gaeltacht. Particular concentrations of habitual Irish-speakers may be noted in the principal cities of the Republic of Ireland – namely, Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. Indeed, according to the results of the 2002 Census there are more daily users of Irish in the Greater Dublin area (63,825) than there are in all of the different Gaeltacht communities taken together (33,789). In urban contexts use of the Irish language is likely to be confined to tightly defined and personalised networks of Irish-speakers. The work of Ó Riagáin and Ó Glasáin (1979) in the Dublin area in the late 1970s points to the centrality of Irish-medium schools to the workings of Irish-speaking networks in the city at that time. To date, no significant further research has been undertaken which might better develop our understanding of the contemporary sociology of the Irish language in urban context.

In general terms, the diffuse geography of the Irish language suggests that local, community-based language planning activities would be more effective than a regional, macro approach to intervention in the field. Effective intervention at this level requires that local Irish-speaking communities take ownership of language policy and planning via agencies which are both based and led by local communities. For An Foras Teanga the translation of macro policy on the Irish language to micro levels requires that a local hurdle be overcome on the measurement of local aspirations and sensitivities. In the context of the complex interlocking and overlapping of powers and competencies that define the relationships between An Foras Teanga and the instruments of governance in both parts of Ireland opportunities for innovation may well exist. As others note of multi-levelled forms of institution in general, it can realise ‘different kinds of access points for actors and the expression of interests, which also widen the potential forms of interest representation and aggregation, enabling new forms of non-traditional and unconventional political activity to find a place and take root’ (Favell and Martiniello, 1999: 9). Thus, the dynamics of the Irish-speaking community in NI could be informed by conceptions of an island-wide language community characterised by

regional and local variations in the nature of the different Irish-speaking communities in NI and in the Republic of Ireland equally, within and outside of the Gaeltacht. Such structures could be a useful vehicle for the operation of informed connections with similar language communities elsewhere in the UK and in this way language planners at micro-levels in Ireland could fashion dynamic synergies with their peers in other parts of the Celtic-speaking UK. The development of community-based planning initiatives in the Irish language, or *Fiontair Teanga*, akin to the *Mentrau Iaith* of Wales, could form an integral part of such synergies (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2001). *Fiontair Teanga* could serve the enabling of broad policy commitments to local levels in a manner similar to the *Mentrau Iaith*. A clear strength of the *Mentrau Iaith* in Wales is that they are community-based initiatives which have originated in and evolved according to the desire of local people to see an increase in the use of Welsh in their local community. Also, their activities are not restricted to certain domains; rather, they are engaged in a holistic form of language planning at micro-levels. For example, they offer advice and support relating to the use of the language to the public, private and voluntary organisations and they support projects that provide opportunities for people, especially children and young people, to socialise through the medium of Welsh. A further strength is their diversity of form, their adaptability. Each *Menter Iaith* reflects its local situation and responds to the social and language needs of its local community. Thus, the main reasons for supporting *Mentrau Iaith* in the Welsh context have been identified as follows:

In situations which are characterised by strong language potential but weak socio-linguistic networks, they offer a significant socio-psychological fillip for maintaining the Welsh language in contexts which would otherwise lead to fragmentation;

In respect of their remit as local language planning bodies, they can function as a focus to create a new set of partnerships between the central government (in the form of the Welsh Office), the Welsh Language Board, local government, statutory public bodies, health trusts and a variety of other voluntary agencies and private companies, so as to extend the opportunities to use Welsh.

(Williams and Evas, 1997: 30)

Community-based language planning initiatives in Ireland could imitate this pattern and be the hubs for the development of the Irish language at local levels. This would give to the language a community-based and holistic form of language planning which would be economically engaged and socially inclusive. Local adaptations would be necessary but the main elements of the general rationale for *Mentrau Iaith* would equally apply to similar such initiatives amongst the Irish-speaking communities and networks in Ireland, namely:

- to create social conditions that will nurture positive attitudes towards Welsh and an increase in its use;
- to normalise the use of Welsh as a medium of social and institutional communication;
- to highlight the close relationship between language and attitudes which relate to quality of life issues, the environment and the local economy.

(Williams and Evas, 1997: 32)

Beyond this, adaptations in the intended functions of *Fiontair Teanga* would be necessary in order to address the socio-political and linguistic nuances of each particular location in its context. For example, in NI *Fiontair Teanga* could play an important role in strengthening the means by which the Irish language is acquired. Language reproduction within the Irish-speaking community in the region is dispersed across a number of mechanisms. Of the Irish-speakers surveyed just under 10 per cent of adults and just over 11 per cent of young people claimed the Irish language as their mother tongue. The education system is of critical importance in the reproduction of the language. Many more of the younger Irish-speakers have had some of their education through the medium of Irish, in contrast to adult Irish-speakers. The fact of experiencing one's education through the medium of Irish appears to effect a confidence in self-perceptions of ability in the language. Thus, other results in this survey show that young Irish-speakers who have experienced Irish-medium nursery education are more likely to return themselves as Irish-speakers of the highest ability later in life. Also, acquisition of the language by Protestants in the region is frustrated by the absence of the language from the curriculum of the state education system and the limited availability of voluntary sector language classes within their locale.

In more general terms, possible aims for community-based language planning initiatives in Ireland could include the following:

- to encourage and facilitate community (including cross-community) ownership of the Irish language;
- to increase levels of awareness of the language among non-Irish-speakers;
- to broaden accessibility to the Irish language across the community as a whole;
- to increase opportunities to use the language beyond the domains of the home and school;
- to offer practical help to families whose language of the home is not Irish but whose children are attending Irish-medium schools;
- to offer practical help to learners of Irish as a second language;

- to liaise with local employers with regard to expanding the role of the Irish language in workplaces;
- to liaise with other Irish language agencies in the field so as to facilitate the knitting together of a holistic approach to language planning issues;
- to increase the public profile and status of the dialectical forms of Irish;
- to strengthen networking between the local Irish-speaking communities.

The impact and efficacy of community-based language planning initiatives will depend, to a great degree, on the initial situation of the Irish language in the local community. It is also crucial that the momentum for community-based language planning initiatives comes from within the specific local communities rather than as the result of the action of external agencies. That said, the geographical analysis of the Irish language based upon census data, for example, serves to highlight a number of locations in which community-based language planning initiatives are likely to be able to function effectively. These locations include the official Gaeltacht areas of the Republic of Ireland, the principal cities of Ireland – Belfast, Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick, Londonderry and Waterford – and certain rural districts such as the Newry and Mourne area of NI or the county of Tipperary in the Republic of Ireland. That is not to say that such initiatives might not be successfully established in other parts of the island, merely that these are the locations for which the strongest *prima facie* cases can be made.

Language impact statements (LIS) are another means of linking language planning to community. Intervention of this nature is more formal and structured as it is embedded in the context of the statutory planning framework. The LIS has emerged in the Republic of Ireland only very recently. Galway County Council committed itself to conducting LISs on developments in the area of the Gaeltacht in its County Development Plan 1997–2002:

The Planning Authority (i.e. Galway County Council) recognizes that the status of the Irish language has been undermined particularly in areas close to Galway City, by immigrant population with no competence in, or affinity for, the language.

To strictly control residential (including single one-off houses), commercial and industrial development, which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, will have a negative impact on the Irish language in the Gaeltacht areas. The Planning Authority will therefore require a linguistic impact statement with all applications for development in the area.

(Galway County Council, 1997)

Galway County Council also developed a short set of guidelines according to which an LIS would realise the following:

- an assessment of the linguistic, social, cultural and economic background of the area, including the surrounding areas, of the proposed development;
- the background, description, objectives and other relevant information regarding the proposed development;
- information about previous developments that the developer has undertaken within the Gaeltacht and the impact that these developments have had on linguistic factors;
- an assessment of the impact the development is likely to have on the use and status of the Irish language;
- a statement of measures that will be taken by the developer to ensure that the development is sustainable from a linguistic point of view.

It is the case that a number of LISs have been completed and that they have contributed to the planning process. However, it is clear that the LIS is a work in progress in the Irish context. For example, in the County Development Plan for 2003–2009 (Galway County Council, 2003) the policy commitment has evolved from the rather simplistically robust version that was formulated in the late 1990s. It reads as follows:

Language Impact Statements will be required where an application is made for two or more houses, or where an applicant applied for more than one house in an area. The purpose of a Language Impact Statement will be to assess the likely impact of the proposed development on the usage of Irish within the Gaeltacht area. Permission will only be granted where the Authority (i.e. Galway County Council) is satisfied that the effect of the development will be beneficial to the usage of the language in the area, if permitted.

Policy 209: Address the need for Language Impact Statements including the concept of a Language Enurement Clause in the proposed Local Area Plan for the Gaeltacht.

Objective 68: The Council accepts that the language is an asset in the Gaeltacht and in order to support the language, the Council shall provide planning and other services through Irish from the Carraroe Office. The Council shall ensure that Irish is the language medium of this office.

Objective 69: Commence preparation of a local area plan for Gaeltacht na Gaillimhe as soon as the County Plan is adopted.

Objective 70: Recognise the economic, social and cultural importance of Irish in the Gaeltacht and throughout the county.

Objective 71: Put in place an effective system through which the

various aspects of the Gaeltacht ethos can be assessed and protected as part of the planning process.

Objective 72: Ensure that all contractors employed by Galway County Council in the Gaeltacht will have regard to the culture in which they work.

(Galway County Council, 2003: 70–1)

The challenge in this regard is to develop a methodology for the LIS which is sufficiently sophisticated to account for nuanced relationships between language, community and development while at the same time being accessible to its principal users and audiences, including developers and local communities alike. Such a methodology ought to account for the impact of development upon the key aspects of community life, including the nature of the local resident population, the general quality of life, the general economic conditions, the statutory social and physical infrastructure, and the vitality of informal and voluntary social and cultural activities. It may well prove to be the case that the work commissioned by the Welsh Consortium of Government on ‘Linguistic Impact Assessment Research Study’ will contribute to the development of an effective methodology in the Irish context. The value of such a methodology would lie in helping to ground policy rhetoric and commitments, as may be read in local council Development Plans or in the National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002–2020, in a social scientific approach to the matter of language in the statutory planning regime. In such a context the negotiation of the sustainability of threatened languages would become a matter of shared ownership and responsibility for agents in the public, the private and the voluntary and community sectors alike.

Beyond social constructivist and primordial perspectives on ethnicity

It is the case that the ethnic composition of society in the Republic of Ireland is increasingly plural and that this is due in large part to the economic growth that is popularly embodied in the metaphor of the Celtic Tiger. However, despite such shifts it is likely that the remarkable homogeneity of the ethnic composition of the Republic of Ireland (e.g. Boyce, 1991: 353; Ruane and Todd, 1991: 37), which has been an important factor in the sustaining of this relationship (Bord na Gaeilge, 1989), will continue to be a factor – but in the context of increasingly complex relationships with the language. It is not improbable to suggest in the wake of the unfolding political landscape post-1998 that the relationship between the Irish ethnic identity and the Irish language is likely to undergo considerable transformation as a more heterogeneous, pluralist society takes shape. Indeed, the deepening of the relationship with the European Union (EU), and its expansion, is a process that is pregnant with language issues

at all levels (e.g. Ruane, 1994). Lee (1989: 676–7), presciently, expressed concern in relation to future government policy on the Irish language in respect of such societal transformations. Most recently, one of the impacts of the campaign of the lobby group Stadas to gain official status for the Irish language within the EU has been to draw into public discourse the matter of whether it is constitutional status or it is community action that is the principal dynamic for reversing language shift. According to some commentators, perceptions that the English and French languages will become increasingly dominant within an expanding EU have contributed to a reinvigoration of the activities of Irish language activists (<<http://news.bbc.co.uk>>, 10 January 2001). Indeed, the attitude of the EU, as reflected in the interview of one of the European Commissioners, appears to invite rigorous contestation – the interviewee contends that having the status of official language ‘doesn’t bring you a thing’ and contrasts the case of the Irish language with that of the language of Luxembourgish, which is ‘a real fact of society’ (<www.ireland.com/newspaper>, 11 March 2004).

The reality is that it should be a matter of both rather than a question of one or the other. Both constitutional status and community action are matters that are equally central to active citizenship; and citizenship, in its fullest sense, is driven by sensitivities to ethnicity and language. Also in this context, ethnicity cannot be understood as either simply primordial or as a social construct. Moving beyond the social constructivist and primordial perspectives on ethnicity is central to moving towards a more purposeful public discourse on the significance of the Irish language for Irish society. The case of the Irish language in NI allows for the exploration of a number of issues in this area. In particular, the Irish language in NI can be seen to transcend traditional socio-political and ethnic dichotomies in the region. The different ethnic groups are shown to seek identifications with the language which facilitate and reinforce senses of belonging, place and authenticity. These powerful, parallel identifications are not unique to the language situation in NI. The outlines of this phenomenon may be traced in other parts of Europe (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2003). A concise survey of interrelationships between language, identity and conflict indicates that these congruencies appear to be coincident with socio-political conflict of varying levels of intensity and processes of political restructuring, and that they are a feature of the postmodern interlock of ethnic and civic forms of nationalism. Postmodern shifts, emergent in the 1960s, have more recently impacted greatly on political structures and ideological frameworks. For example, Eley identified in the period 1989–1992

[a] remarkable movement of historical change ... one of those few times when fundamental political and constitutional changes, in complex articulation with social and economic transformations, are

occurring on a genuinely Europe-wide scale, making this one of several great constitution-making periods of modern history.

(Eley, 1992: 415)

Since this was written Gorbachev has fallen from power, the former Yugoslavia has imploded into Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, and the UK itself has seen devolution to NI, Scotland and Wales. This dismantling of large-scale political institutions has been paralleled by a complex interlocking of the two main bases of modern nationalism (Breton, 1988; Brubaker, 1992, 1996). These are the civic nationalism constructed around institutions of various types and ethnic nationalism grounded in cultural identities which have evolved organically and which frequently find their meaning in the defining attribute of language. In assessing contemporary relationships between language and identity it is clear that the complex interlocking of civic and ethnic forms of nationalism is manifest in political discourses across Europe. Moreover, these adaptations in nationalist rhetoric coincide with changing conceptualisations of ethnic identity. While the matrix which defined national and ethnic identities in Europe up until very recently was broken up by very different socio-political forces, certain patterns can be discerned in this unfolding landscape of language and identity.

It is emerging with increasing clarity that ethnic identity is increasingly experienced as an overlapping and multidimensional phenomenon. The spaces between ethnic groups are increasingly manipulated as porous frontiers rather than as rigid boundaries. The differing function of frontiers and boundaries is critical in understanding this contemporary refashioning of ethnic identity. This has been described as follows:

Political frontiers and boundaries separate areas subject to different political control or sovereignty. Frontiers are *zones* of varying widths which were common features of the political landscape centuries ago. By the beginning of the twentieth century most remaining frontiers had disappeared and had been replaced by boundaries which are *lines*.

(Prescott, 1987: 1)

This view relates the idea of the frontier to political entities and is a way of conceiving of frontiers which is common to many cultures. Historical explanations of the same illustrate the evolving nature of the idea of the frontier (Power and Standen, 1999: 1–31). For example, the French term '*frontière*' and the Spanish term '*frontera*' emerge during the Middle Ages as a militarised zone. The German term '*grenzgebiet*', meaning a frontier zone, emerges much later during the nineteenth century and has a much more pacific meaning than the French and Spanish terms. North American concepts of the frontier are different again. During the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth the frontier of the American West is seen as a

wilderness, or a dynamic zone in which savagery encounters civilisation. Contemporary conceptualisations of the frontier delineate a middle ground in which two cultures interact in relative equilibrium and achieve some sort of reconciliation: 'Since these two cultures were then in relative equilibrium, the middle ground was characterised by what Richard White calls "creative misunderstandings" which enabled the two societies to overcome their cultural differences' (Power and Standen, 1999: 10). In this way frontiers may be read as a dynamic cultural landscape in which politics, history and sense of place are all a part of the interweave.

Since Barth ([1969] 1998) conceived of ethnicity as the social organisation of cultural difference our understanding of how ethnic borders function to maintain senses of ethnic identity has deepened. Following Barth, much of the attention given by academic enquirers to ethnic identity has focused upon boundary-connected features of group identity. It is via these features that stable ethnic distinctions are sustained and this is done despite the transgression of borders by members of ethnic groups. This is characterised by Barth as 'a dichotomization of others as strangers, as members of another ethnic group' (Barth, [1969] 1998: 15). According to Barth this allows us to understand a particular of boundary maintenance described as 'situations of social contact between persons of different cultures' (Barth, [1969] 1998: 15–16), and that despite congruencies of culture in these situations there exists a structuring of interaction which sustains cultural difference. This understanding of ethnicity is grounded in a particular setting:

These modern variants for poly-ethnic organization emerge in a world of bureaucratic administration, developed communications, and progressive urbanization. Clearly, under radically different circumstances, the critical factors in the definition and maintenance of ethnic boundaries would be different.

(Barth, [1969] 1998: 35–6)

Contemporary socio-political fractures suggest these new circumstances. Barth ([1969] 1998) identifies an amorphous mechanism, idealised as a current in a unifying river, at work in relationships between ethnic groups. This allows one to focus on congruencies as well as dichotomies across ethnic group identities:

Whereas my effort until now has been to emphasize the search for distinctions, for the fuller delimitation of the contradictions of pluralism, any closer and fuller analysis forces us to acknowledge the relativity of these boundaries, or rather the interpenetration and constant interchange implicit in the imagery of currents.

(Barth, [1969] 1998: 83)

He concludes with a plea for a search for the process of change within the context of the locality, the community and beyond. The other mechanism identified by Barth can be conceived of as a frontier in contrast to his lineal ethnic boundary. Contextualising the idea of frontier in relation to ethnic identity enables one to perceive spaces on the socio-political landscape within which senses of ethnic identity interact. This interaction is not characterised by Barthian functions by which ethnic dichotomies are defined and sustained across ethnic boundaries. Rather, this ethnic frontier is to be perceived as a zone in which ethnic identities are negotiated and reformulated and that transformations in the nature of a form of ethnic identity are realised in a diffusion of Barthian dichotomies. Thus the ethnic border is the mechanism whereby ethnic identity is maintained and the ethnic frontier is the mechanism whereby ethnic identity is transformed. Language has a privileged function in transformations in the nature of ethnic identity, and some of the key features of this can be illustrated with regard to the case of the Irish language in NI.

In 'The Agreement' (NIO, 1998) it is clear from significant sections of the text that issues of identity are at the heart of the political conflict in NI. For example, under the important opening section, 'Constitutional Issues', the signatories of the document agree that they will

recognise the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly confirm that their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship is accepted by both Governments and would not be affected by any future change in the status of Northern Ireland.

(NIO, 1998: 2)

This commitment also appears as Article 1.vi in the section entitled 'Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and the Government of Ireland', pp. 27–9. Issues of ethnic and cultural identities are formulated in the document in relation to the Irish language. Under the section 'Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity. Economic, Social and Cultural Issues' it is stated:

All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are a part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.

(NIO, 1998: 19, Clause 3)

The document continues, in Clause 4, to outline a series of commitments on the part of the British government to the Irish language in the region in the domains of education, the broadcast media and administration.

The general commitments formalised in 'The Agreement' are to be implemented within the legislative framework of an agreement between the British and Irish governments entitled 'Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Government of Ireland Establishing Implementation Bodies' (henceforth described as 'The Implementation Bodies Agreement') signed on 8 March 1999. The political rhetoric which accompanied 'The Implementation Bodies Agreement' highlights the increasing role of the language in the politics of the region. In December 1998 progress on framing implementation was in deadlock over what were described as 'crunch issues' by the NIO BBC Online Network (<<http://www.bbc.co.uk>>, 2 December 1998). UUP sources noted their concern over three of the proposed cross-border institutions, including that for the Irish language. Shortly after this negotiators for Sinn Féin emphasised their determination to see through the establishment of such a language body, describing it as a 'bottom line ... with the nationalist community' (BBC Online Network <<http://www.bbc.co.uk>>, 8 December 1998). Such postures concur with earlier declarations on the Irish language from across the political spectrum. In the editorial of the moderate unionist daily the *Belfast Telegraph* (19 August 1997) the language was described as 'a minor irritant' whose presence made Unionists feel uncomfortable. A source for the UUP was clear as to where the origins of this discomfort lay, writing that 'the Irish Gaelic language movement since the second decade of this century has for the most part been allied to the causes of Irish separatism, the antithesis of Irish, and Ulster unionism' (*Irish News*, 25 August 1997). More recently, as the UUP and Sinn Féin finally reached agreement over the vexed issues of the decommissioning of arms and the establishment of the executive to the Assembly, the language has been drawn into the political landscape. The *Belfast Telegraph* recently carried the following advice for Martin McGuinness, leading member of *Sinn Féin* and new minister for education in the devolved government: 'He must try harder, in future, to understand worries about his appointment and to measure his words about language policy or his paramilitary past with the greatest care' (*Belfast Telegraph*, 8 December 1999). On the same matter the Irish language weekly *Lá* noted:

Is iad tacaithe an DUP atá chun tosaigh in eagrú agóidí i gcoinne an Aire McGuinness agus dúirt Ian Paisley Junior, Dé Luain, gur cur amú áiseanna agus airgid do chúrsaí oideachais a bhí i gcaitheamh airgid ar an 'non-existent Irish language'. [It is the supporters of the DUP who are starting organising protests against the Minister McGuinness and Ian Paisley Junior said, on Monday, that it was a waste of educational affairs resources to be spending money on the 'non-existent Irish language'.]

(*Lá*, 13 December 1999, <<http://www.nuacht.com>>)

The UUP statement of 16 November 1999 strikes a less strident note, recognising that 'Disagreements over language issues, parades and other events must be resolved if the stability and tolerance we all want to see are to be realised' (*Irish Times*, 16 November 1999). A more accommodating attitude is to be welcomed by the Irish-speaking community of NI, especially since the politician with ultimate responsibility for policy on Irish language is a member of the UUP *An Teanga Bheo* (*Irish Times*, <<http://www.Irish-times.com>>, 6 December 1999). A brother of this appointee spent a time as a trustee of the Ultach Trust, a body with responsibility for promoting the Irish language in NI. In any case, a fuller understanding of the place of the Irish language in the region requires that one moves beyond the political rhetoric.

Concern has been expressed in some quarters at the politicisation of language matters, especially as some nationalist politicians seek to align themselves with the Irish language in an exclusive manner and in reaction other unionist politicians seek to adopt the Ulster-Scots tongue as their own language (Mac Póilin, 1998). Information derived from the semi-structured interview with representatives of the Ulster-Scots Heritage Council conducted during fieldwork by the author does little to dispel this concern. The interviewees conveyed an inimical attitude towards what they perceived as an Irish language lobby driven by nationalist party political goals. They were also disappointed in their discovery that the Scots language, the sister tongue of Ulster-Scots and widely spoken in Scotland, engages the interest of Scottish nationalists, irrespective of other identifications with the language. At the time of the interview, and despite the longevity of the Ulster-Scots tongue as the common language of both Catholics and Protestants, membership of the board of trustees of the Ulster-Scots Heritage Council was exclusively Protestant and unionist. These interviewees also asserted that the Irish language was of little or no interest to what they perceived as their community. Claims that the Irish language is not attractive to Protestants and Unionists can be supported by a superficial reading of the 1991 Census data. These data confirm very low levels of engagement with the language on the part of Protestants: almost 90 per cent of Irish-speakers returned themselves as Catholics. However, it is far from the case that the Irish language in NI reinforces the traditional socio-political cleavages of the region. There are very powerful structural reasons for the low incidence of Irish-speakers amongst Protestants. The absence of the language from the curriculum of the state (almost wholly Protestant) educational system in the region and the very low status afforded to the language by the unionist-dominated government of NI seated at Stormont are probably the two main factors for the small numbers of Irish-speakers recorded among Protestants (Andrews, 1991, 1997). Indeed, given such powerful structural forces working against the Irish language among Protestants one could be reasonably surprised that any Protestants at all may be numbered among the Irish-speaking community.

Other sources indicate that Protestants engage with the Irish language in a variety of ways. Something of the complexity of Protestant identifications with the Irish language and culture is hinted at by Billy Hutchinson of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) and formerly of a prominent loyalist paramilitary movement, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). In a recent interview he described himself as 'culturally Irish and politically British' (*Guardian*, 29 June 1999). This assertion is suggestive of a sophistication of identity which belies traditional preconceptions. Popular sources indicate interest in the language among Unionist and middle-class Protestants (Mistéil, 1994; *Belfast Telegraph*, 3 February 1993; *Community Relations Council News*, 17 September 1994) and also loyalist and working-class Protestants, including paramilitaries (Smith, 1994). To this could be added the all-female group of adult learners of Irish from Protestant and working-class Shankill in west Belfast (*Lá*, 24 November 1994). The fact of the existence of this group would appear to confound the suggestion of some social scientists that in societies in conflict women tend to be much more conservative in their cultural practices: 'Women ... also have a major role in transmitting culture and tradition between the generations and in the process may perpetuate and reinforce separation and hostility' (Morgan and Fraser, 1995: 86). The results of this survey suggest greater levels of engagement in the Irish language on the part of adult female respondents by contrast with their male peers and that this is characterised by firm assertions that the language is a part of their cultural heritage and also that it is something which belongs to the wider community in NI. That said, a large minority of the adult female respondents were attracted to an exclusive relationship between Irish national identity and the Irish language. Also, it is only among adult females that a clear majority can be found to strongly support the broadening of the place of Irish in the education system throughout NI. Explanations of such differences can only be tentative. Fraser (1991) suggests that two factors are most likely to lie behind gender differences of this nature in NI. They are the relatively narrow extent of social contacts in the workplace context in particular and the relatively higher levels of religious commitment which have been noted among females in the region (Fraser, 1991: 145–7). Other results from the survey would indicate that the breadth of social contacts of females and their actual use of Irish in the workplace is, if anything, greater than that of their male counterparts (Table 8.7). They also show that there is little variation across the genders in relation to the extent of use of the language in relation to the Church as an institution (Table 8.8). Perhaps an explanation may be found in the ways in which females perceive of and engage in political activity, in the most general sense of the term. It has been noted that women in NI have become increasingly prominent in a range of local community-based activities which are political in nature, although women deny that their involvement constitutes participation in political activity:

Table 8.7 Gender by use of the Irish language in workplace, adults only (%)

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
Female	60	14	8	9	9
Male	73	9	9	9	–

Table 8.8 Gender by use of the Irish language with the Church, adults only (%)

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
Female	67	6	18	9	–
Male	57	23	12	–	8

These are in a sense highly political actions, but the women who take part resist the label, suggesting that it is not that women are less interested than men in politics but that they are exploring different forms of political action possible in response to the ‘closed shop’ operated by men and possibly also in an attempt to break out of the rigid forms of political debate in Northern Ireland.

(Morgan and Fraser, 1995: 93)

The results from this study indicating that females, irrespective of age, are much less concerned at the politicisation of the Irish language than males may suggest that their commitment to the language may be similarly characterised.

Another survey (Stringer and Robinson, 1991) conducted across NI suggests an extensive pool of interest in the language across the community as a whole. The survey found that 23 per cent of Protestants consider that the study of the Irish language and culture should be a necessary part of the curriculum of all secondary schools in the region. Other academic sources indicate the success in educational initiatives in the fields of Cultural Heritage and Education for Mutual Understanding arising from the Education Reform Order (NI) 1989 in raising awareness and enabling positive engagement with aspects of Irish culture, including the Irish language, in schools from across the traditional divides in the region (Smith and Robinson, 1996: 82; Farren, 1996: 61). A greater degree of insight into relationships between Protestants and the Irish language is to be gained from the work of McCoy (1997). The results of this anthropological study of Protestant learners of the Irish language suggest that socio-economic class is a factor in determining the nature of these relationships. In brief, it is indicated that Protestant members of the middle class identify with the language in a cultural or regional sense in that it allows for the authentication of their sense of place in Ireland and of their sharing in the historical inheritance of the island. Protestant members of the working class sim-

ilarly identify with the language as an item of a heritage in which they share, only in this case in the context of an awareness of a sense of Ulster or Northern Irish identity. Some others identified themselves as Irish nationalists. Sociological surveys on senses of national identity amongst Protestants trace an evolution which informs this. In 1968 (Rose, 1971) before the beginning of the recent political conflict in NI around 20 per cent of Protestants identified themselves as Irish. By 1986 (Whyte, 1990) that figure had fallen to 3 per cent. Ulster identity is similarly in retreat in this period. At the same time surveyors became aware of the necessary inclusion in social surveys of a new identity descriptor, styled 'Northern Irish'. This term was first used for this purpose in 1986, and in that case 11 per cent of Protestants and 20 per cent of Catholics chose it as the term which best described their sense of identity (Whyte, 1990: 68–9). The proportions of individuals in both religious communities which identify themselves as Northern Irish increase consistently in the period, rising to 16 per cent of Protestants and 25 per cent of Catholics by 1991 (Moxon-Browne, 1991). Later surveys, conducted in 1993, 1994 and 1995, show very similar levels of response.

For Ruane and Todd this sense of identity is of particular significance as Northern Irish identifiers perceive greater degrees of cultural overlap between Britain and Ireland in the region of NI and are sensitive to British, Irish and European dimensions to their identity (Ruane and Todd, 1996: 59, 71). Trew, in a further examination of the Northern Irish sense of identity, asserts that 'the Northern Irish identity is being used by the young, the educated and the middle class. It is particularly widely used by well educated young Protestants' (Trew, 1998: 66). In the same survey data on identity preferences are cross-tabulated with stated constitutional and political preferences. This exercise showed that Northern Irish identifying Catholics did not vary significantly from other Catholics in their disposition towards Irish nationalist aspirations. Similarly, Northern Irish identifying Protestants did not vary significantly in their disposition towards unionist aspirations (Trew, 1998: 66). In other words, the Northern Irish sense of identity unites at the level of culture but divides at the level of ideology. This echoes an observation made by Thomas that the Irish language in NI appeared to be 'a uniting factor at the level of nationality', but 'a divisive one at the level of ideology' (Thomas, 1995: 120). Similar adjustments of identity are to be seen with regards to the Irish language and Irish ethnic identity. Data from several surveys would suggest that the early twentieth-century link between the language and a separatist nationalist identity is being eroded. The results of national surveys on language in the Republic of Ireland (Ó Riagáin and Ó Gliasáin, 1984, 1994) conducted in 1973, 1983 and 1993, indicate a consistently lower level of ethnic regard for the language as a symbol of a rigorous and distinctive Irish identity. This dislocation of the Irish language from other markers of Irish identity, and its repositioning with regards to Northern Irish and British

identifiers, makes clear the complexity of contemporary transformations in this field. The results of the recent fieldwork of the author allow for further insights into these complexities. The data indicate an intricacy of attitudes towards the Irish language across the community as a whole, and particularly so amongst Protestants. The results suggest that Catholics and Protestants hold the language in the same general regard. A majority of both Catholics and Protestants disagreed with the statement 'The Irish language should be discarded and forgotten'. Similarly, majorities of both Catholics and Protestants disagreed with the statement 'In order to be truly Irish one must be able to speak Irish'. Taken together, these responses strongly suggest that Protestant regard for the language is more positive than the politics of the language would lead one to believe. They also suggest that the language is not commonly perceived as an exclusive indicator of Irish ethnicity.

Beyond this platform deeper complexities may be perceived as Catholic and Protestant attitudes diverge significantly in relation to other statements specific to perceptions of communal and self-identity. The statement 'The Irish language belongs to all the people in Northern Ireland' met with overwhelming agreement amongst Catholics. While around one in three of Protestants from both age groups surveyed concurred, around one-quarter felt otherwise and of these almost one in every three disagreed strongly that the language was owned by all the people in NI. The statement 'The Irish language is an important part of my heritage' met with still higher levels of agreement amongst Catholics, with an overwhelming majority expressing very strong agreement with the statement. The largest proportion of Protestants, almost half, very strongly disagreed with the statement, although a significant minority (approximately 19 per cent) agreed that the Irish language was an important part of their heritage. These data also allow for inferences to be drawn with regard to relationships between the language and a number of forms of ethnic identity in the area of study. Substantial numbers of respondents returned themselves as British, Irish or Northern Irish. Variations in attitude towards the Irish language can be read across these identity types. Irish identifiers may be characterised by their clear support for the Irish language across a wide range of issues. Northern Irish identifiers, including significant proportions of both Catholics and Protestants in their numbers, tend to concur with Irish identifiers in their regard for the Irish language, while they are more divided in their responses to specific policy issues such as the broadening of the place of the language in the education system. British identifiers, almost exclusively Protestant, are characterised by their ambiguity towards the language. For example, they were very evenly divided in their responses to the statement 'The Irish language should be discarded and forgotten' and, in contrast to Irish and Northern Irish identifiers, tended to agree that the Irish language should be preserved only in the Gaeltacht. They were divided as to whether the Irish language belonged to all the

people of NI, but were rather more definite in asserting that it wasn't a part of their individual heritage. Despite these variations it is none the less significant that clear majorities of British, Irish and Northern Irish identifiers disagreed with the statement 'In order to be truly Irish one must be able to speak Irish', thereby rejecting linguistically exclusive definitions of Irish identity.

It is clear that there are many Protestants in NI who identify with the language in a variety of ways. The Northern Irish sense of identity appears to function as a critical point of confluence for significant numbers of Catholics and Protestants. In this broadening ethnic space the significance of the Irish language for society as a whole in NI is being shifted from the polar positions typified by the political rhetoric of some nationalist and unionist politicians towards some of the difficult compromises that will have to be achieved if the political settlement is to have a substantial impact on the fortunes of the Irish language in the region. The survey also showed that many expressed neither agreement nor disagreement on key issues relating to the language. Such people are likely to be more open to persuasion of the case for Irish under circumstances in which language issues appear to be less charged politically. In this context the Irish language has an important role to play in transcending traditional divisions in society in NI as the meanings of both national identity and sovereignty are adjusted to the new realities of devolution.

Postmodern spaces – aspects of a new research agenda for the Irish language?

One area in which the Irish language has a significant social presence but is substantially under-researched and therefore poorly understood is the city. A number of themes which might guide research in this context may be identified. These comprise the relationship between connections between the city and the world beyond and internal differentiation within the city, the concept of the 'stranger' and its relationship to difference, city rhythms, relationships between social and spatial divisions, marginalised groups and resistance, city regimes and order and disorder. Cities are defined by the enormous range of social, economic, cultural, ethnic and other contrasts to which they are home. But, and perhaps more significantly, the city serves to exaggerate these contrasts and it is in this quality that the definitive feature of the city may be identified – its intensity. As Pile (1999a: 43–8) notes from the work of Wirth, the city in its sheer size, density and heterogeneity creates something new – new kinds of social interaction, new forms of difference and new opportunities in lifestyle. The novelty of the city, however, is also inherently paradoxical. For example, moving to the city may enable an escape from the ties that bind many typical rural communities together within a rigid set of values to which conformity is highly valued, but it may also entail the loss of the

sense of social intimacy that such a community often affords. City life, by contrast, can provide ready social familiarity, though of a form that is largely superficial and quite anonymous. The unique intensity of cities is the product both of connections and of internal differentiation. They ought not to be considered as simple discrete subjects but rather as inter-related phenomena. For example, migrants are attracted to cities from far afield. Upon their arrival and settlement in the city, these people make a home of the city and in doing so the social and physical fabric of the city comes to comprise that which Pinch describes as 'an intricate variety of social and built environment' (Pinch, 2000: 31). Both Allen (1999a, 1999b) and Massey (1999) show that processes other than migration also function in such a manner, including social, economic, environmental, cultural and political processes, together with associated flows of information, commodities, services, capital and ideas. All cities exhibit this complex interrelation of connection and differentiation. Thus, cities are the focal points of social relations and the vigour of this focus is central to their vitality. Cities are, however, more than simple social foci. Through interrogating the city as both connected and internally differentiated it is possible to illuminate that which is socially and conceptually distinctive about cities and their social relationships. That distinction is to be drawn in an intense quality of time and space and being, and that quality is the product of the complex interrelationships of connection and differentiation.

The 'stranger' is central to understanding urban life. O'Reilly (1995), in her overview of the Irish language in west Belfast, makes some limited gestures towards this; however, a rigorous examination of the Irish language in a contemporary urban context requires engagement with a number of issues. For example, the key features of the open intensity that defines urban life – cities as sites of proximity and co-presence, as multiplicities of space-times and as meeting places – turn, in many ways, upon the notion of 'strangeness'. Through examining the place of the social and natural 'other participants' in urban life, to paraphrase Hannerz (in Allen *et al.*, 1999: 40), the physical spaces that are cities can be shown to be the sites of multilayered and complex relational webs. Working within a relational perspective on cities, it is also noted that there is a bond between the known self and the strange other. The 'stranger' is not a wholly ephemeral or transient presence – there can be no potential excitement of discovery nor sense of threat of the unknown in a temporary acquaintance, but is instead an 'intimate stranger' – the embodiment of the ambivalent tension of the recognisable or familiar unknown and, as such, an intrinsic feature of that which defines urban life. This encounter with 'strangeness' may be energising and liberating in enabling the forging of new identities but, as is further noted, this intimate encounter is not innocent of questions of inequality and domination. In this sense, negotiating difference and identity is also a matter of power.

The idea of the 'stranger' as an intimate outsider may be illustrated

from the work of Wirth. According to Wirth 'a city may be defined as a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of *socially heterogeneous individuals*' [my italics] (Wirth in Pile, 1999a: 43). A city, therefore, comprises the following:

- large numbers of people;
- density of settlement;
- heterogeneity of individuals and of group life.

An examination of these features can help begin to locate the 'stranger' in urban life. Large numbers of people in cities affect the ways in which people interact because of the greater range of variation between individuals, the greater numbers of social interactions and the greater potential for differentiation among people. This, according to Wirth, 'should give rise to the spatial segregation of individuals according to colour, ethnic heritage, economic and social status, tastes and preferences' (Wirth in Pile, 1999a: 43). Wirth, however, does not explain why spatial segregation should arise, nor does he describe the social processes underlying either spatial segregation or social differentiation. It is significant, however, that it is noted that the large numbers of people allow for new kinds of social interaction that do not rely upon kinship ties, neighbourliness, communal sentiment, tradition and folk attitudes characteristic of rural life and, in this sense, the density of urban population is socially liberating. A note of caution should be drawn, however, as according to Wirth

the contrasts of the city may indeed be face to face, but they are nevertheless impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental, the reserve, the indifference, and the blasé outlook which urbanites manifest in their relationships may thus be regarded as devices for immunizing themselves against the personal claims and expectations of others.

(Wirth in Pile, 1999a: 44)

The social interaction of urban life is ambivalent, therefore, as, for example, contacts may at the same time be superficial and anonymous while also releasing individuals from the obligations or expectations that pertain to the more immediate and rigid framework of rural communities. Also, while urban dwellers are released from such traditions, ties and constraints, they become alienated from participation in communal life and do not relate to other people as if they were part of a community. In this sense cities disorganise social life as previous forms of social organisation are undermined and replaced by social relations whose organisation is based on indifference, superficiality and individualistic materialism. This is also, of course, one of the paradoxes that seem to define urban life – the

embodiment of elements that are seemingly opposed and their intensification and concentration in the city.

The intensity and concentration characteristic of cities are crucial in understanding the social production of difference in urban space. The concentration of people leads to forms of distancing as the city contains the possibility for individuals to differentiate themselves from others, and also the opportunity for like-minded individuals to form new associations. According to Wirth (drawing on Simmel):

the close physical contact of numerous individuals [which] necessarily produces a shift in the medium through which we orient ourselves to the urban milieu ... our physical contacts are close but our social contacts are distant ... we tend to acquire and develop sensitivity to a world of artefacts and become progressively further removed from the world of nature.

(Wirth in Pile, 1999a: 45)

Thus, as the city intertwines and amasses people and concentrates the coexistence of differences, it requires an exactness of co-ordination and organisation. For Wirth and Simmel, therefore, through the resultant differentiation of urban space the city comes 'to resemble a mosaic of social worlds' (Pile, 1999a: 47) where juxtapositions between one piece of the mosaic and another are abrupt and clear-cut.

Pile, however, modifies this vision of difference in the city. He notes that while the former rigidities of identity begin to break down in the encounters between different people, differences become much more nuanced. Moreover, the social stratification of cities is difficult to determine as people are continually bridging and crossing social hierarchies. The status of individuals changes from context to context and, over time, there is an inherent instability and insecurity in urban identities. The metaphor of the mosaic is thus reworked:

Because urban identities are exposed as social fictions, individuals are freed to identify, affiliate and associate with divergent groups. The consequences of this are not just personal, however. Urban spaces, like urban social hierarchies, are liable to be fluid, unstable and contain people with allegiances and affiliations to multiple groups. It would, therefore, be a mistake to characterise the city as having a stable pattern of differences – like a mosaic of coloured ceramic tiles cemented to the earth. Instead, the surfaces of the mosaic are liable to shift, to slide over or between one another, even to change pattern.

(Pile, 1999a: 48)

The spatial expression of heterogeneity in urban life is most clearly manifest in the meeting of different peoples in public spaces. The 'strangers'

pushed and pulled by various forces of migration to the city do not relate to each other as immediate and necessary companions in a coherent community possessing a singular and fixed notion of its sense of place in the world; rather, they are bonded by common civic values, realised through the institutions of urban citizenship. McDowell puts it in the following terms:

The ties that link urban strangers ... are the ties of the polity. The bonds between urban residents are not the close personal and intimate ties based on the private relationships between kith and kin and close personal friends. The urban crowd, the multitude of strangers, is instead united through the rights and obligations of common citizenship and through participation in the public life of a city.

(McDowell, 1999: 97)

Accessibility to public space, both literal and metaphorical, is a key issue for the equal expression of diversity and the negotiation of difference. Two important points flow from this – that the production of social differences between people affects who may or may not move within and between the public spaces of a city and, second, that people can and do become fixed or trapped in urban space. This is another of those city paradoxes, dynamism and stasis – the city, on the one hand, as a ‘fluid collection of people’ and, on the other hand, the city as a set of ‘urban villages’ (McDowell, 1999: 96).

There is a relationship between the public space and the polity. Put simply, in democratic societies all citizens are equal *de jure*. Theory, however, does not translate into practice in a straightforward manner and in the urban public space the same rights are not enjoyed by all *de facto*. As McDowell points out, some people (variously women, children, the working class, non-natives, the mob, young people) are ‘less welcome’ than others in the public space, a domain which is regarded by the empowered sections of urban society as the realm of ‘decent’ citizens (middle-class males, generally speaking) (McDowell, 1999: 109). As illustrated by McDowell (1999: 114–24) for Los Angeles (following Sennett) and for Paris (following Maspero and Frantz), this is reflected in the restriction of access not only to physical civic space but also to the civic spaces that are the public institutions of urban life and to citizenship itself. In short, anxiety regarding the uninhibited, public association of ‘strangers’ is a constant feature of urban life, and central to this anxiety is a contestation over rights of legitimate access to public space and therefore to the benefits that flow from that as a result. The question arises, therefore, as to how might the ‘stranger’ be accommodated to urban life – diversity negotiated, conflict resolved and social and political institutions tolerant of difference be created and sustained.

Toni Morrison, in an impressionistic (*chez Hannerz*) account of 1920s

Harlem described the place as 'thrifless, warm, scary and *full of amiable strangers*' [my italics] (Morrison quoted in Massey *et al.*, 1999: 54). Perhaps the adjective is not quite right, but the perception of the urban scene and the place of the 'stranger' in it holds true for the city in general. The conception of the 'stranger' plays a central role in understanding cities as sites of open intensity, of connection and disconnection, and as a series of overlays where some movements and relationships come into full view whilst others are partially obscured. Yet, as Allen (1999a) puts it, as the overlays shift, different groups of people and their worlds come into proximity. Hence, '[c]ities are evocative places, places where people are drawn into all kinds of proximate relationships, often by chance, often fleetingly and often on an unequal basis' (Allen, 1999a: 85). Issues of power also pertain to locating the 'stranger' in the city. While cities have the potential to empower and liberate, the encounters between 'strangers' are not of necessity a 'genuine cultural interchange' for, as Amin and Graham put it,

Change intermeshes with the highly unequal relations of social and economic power which tie together as well as disconnect, the diverse groups living in cities ... Contemporary urban landscapes ... are thus etched with highly uneven social and power relations ... Every aspect of the social fluidity and cultural dynamism of cities leads to complex asymmetries of power and enablement, and constraint and domination.
(Amin and Graham, 1999: 34)

Application of the notion of the 'stranger' to urban life throws the complex nature of cities into relief, revealing aspects of the city that would otherwise be less completely comprehended.

An examination of what may be described as the rhythms of cities reveals that they are profoundly shaped but not wholly determined by a limited number of empowered, global cities. It can also be seen that the power of these global cities arises from a complex arrangement of factors relating to the networks of which they are a part. However, there are indications that their power is not overwhelming and that the rhythms of cities are also shaped in other ways and by other forces. It should be noted that the notion of city rhythms encompasses a patterning of behaviours from the full range of social activity at all levels. Allen puts it as follows:

By city rhythms, we mean anything from the regular comings and goings of people about the city to the vast range of repetitive activities, sounds and even smells that punctuate life in the city and which give many of those who live and work there a sense of time and location.
(Allen, 1999a: 56)

And alternatively, city rhythms are the 'regular beats and repetitive flows which mould it [the city] in different ways at different times' (Allen, 1999a:

63). A city is characterised by a set of separate but related rhythms. However, this patterning of rhythms within a city can be disrupted – ‘city spaces are constructed in a discontinuous fashion ... [they] are not simply given: they are produced through many movements and interactions coming together in ways that often disrupt existing rhythms and relationships across cities’ (Allen, 1999a: 66). Some rhythms may become dominant, others be submerged; new rhythms may cut across existing rhythms; disruptions may come from beyond the city as well as from ‘below the surface’ (Allen, 1999a: 71, 73). The works of both Sassen (1991) and Castells (1996) are important keys to developing an understanding of how such rhythms pass, or flow, between cities, the role certain cities play in shaping these flows and the extent to which certain cities can be said to be powerful, global agents in relation to other cities. Sassen and Castells represent two different, but related, perspectives on this question. They are both concerned with the nature of connections between cities and the function of networks in the global economy. For both, the flows of investment finance via the connections of new information and communications technologies comprise an especially significant network. While such flows are extremely dynamic they not anarchic. They are partly defined by the technology but are also shaped by laws, regulations, institutions and states. Such organising elements operate at all levels, micro and macro. It is upon the manner of the organising, that is the question of the locus of power in these global economic flows, that Sassen and Castells may be said to diverge. This difference is crucial in developing an understanding of the extent to which the rhythms of cities are determined by a small number of powerful, global cities.

For Sassen, certain powerful cities may be said to run the global networks of economic production and finance. As such, power is located in these cities and, in this sense, the global networks arise from the fact of the power of these specific sites – the global city powers the network. Sassen builds upon the work of Friedmann (Allen, 1999b: 192–4) in her conception of a global hierarchy of cities. For Sassen, the intensity, complexity and scale of global economic connections means that the emergence of an elite club of powerful cities with a global influence is inevitable. Cities such as New York, London and Tokyo occupy key locations in the global economy and exercise substantial control over it because of their agglomeration of various important specialist activities. Their global capacity is produced through the acquisition of expertise – financial analysts, lawyers, managers, bankers, etc. – and, taken together, this critical mass of financial services professionals construct the economic power of the cities. The global economy, which is the domain of such individuals, is not so much an arena into which they and others might venture; rather, it is something which is embedded in the institutions of which they are a part. And, it is through the practices of these institutions that the global flows of economic activity are regulated, or, as Allen puts it, ‘stabilised’:

The production of a global capability in this context stems from the possibility of attracting from elsewhere best practice in managing and settling a greater proportion of the economic flows and transactions worldwide. In short, the greater the concentration of flows stabilized, the more intense the power that is said to radiate from it.

(Allen, 1999b: 198)

In this way, the cities of New York, London and Tokyo, interconnected by the new information and communication technologies, dominate the global economy.

In contrast, Castells's relational view sees a 'space of flows' as the locus of power and, in this way, the power of certain cities is a product of the nature of the flow of global networks – global networks mobilise specific cities. Castells argues that global cities are best understood as a process rather than a series of discrete places. According to Castells, the power of certain cities as hubs or nodes in the global economy also relates to the elite personnel of the financial services, though not as a result of their particular city-base. Instead, Castells sees their power as being derived from their particular point of attachment to the global economic flows. It is in this 'space of flows', and not in the global cities as discrete sites, that power resides. Hence, the power that cities exercise is drawn from the networks of the global economy in accordance with the level of access their resident professional elite have to these networks. As Allen puts it: 'city powers are mobilized through networks; it is what flows through the networks which empowers particular groups and generates certain cities as sites of power' (Allen, 1999b: 199). Indeed, according to Castells, these 'particular groups' are in closer social and cultural proximity to others who have similar access to the networks of the global economy than to other different groups who, while they may reside in the same city, occupy contrasting social, cultural and economic spaces. Global cities as process displace a hierarchy of sites with a network of flows punctuated by hubs through which they are directed.

That said, the differences between the two may be somewhat overstated. For example, Castells would probably concur with Sassen in her assertion that with regard to the global economy 'the network is the strategic architecture' (Sassen, 1999). Moving beyond a simple dichotomy between Sassen and Castells through developing a relational view of the city that includes connection with, for example, the contemporary nation-state and its current trajectory on a global scale, as Castells (1997) begins to trace in his work on Catalonia and as Gilbert notes (1999: 267) for Bogotá, seems essential. Equally, the task of more closely identifying the significance of transnational flows other than the economic, something Sassen hints at through reference to immigrant populations in global cities, appears vital. Language, as exemplified by the phenomenon of 'global English', is a necessary consideration. It may well be in the context of such

language flows that the contemporary impact of the Internet upon the Irish language is at its most profound as, according to Crystal (2001) in his introduction to language and the Internet, and in the ethnographic approach to the Internet as formulated by Miller and Slater (2000), it is difficult to overstate the significance of the Internet for language in general and therefore for all languages in particular, including the Irish language:

The linguistic consequences of evolving a medium in which the whole world participates – at least in principle, once their countries' infrastructure and internal economy allow them to gain access – are also bound to be far-reaching ... What happens, linguistically, when the members of the human race use a technology enabling any of them to be in routine contact with anyone else? There has been much talk of the notion of a 'global village', which is at first sight a persuasive metaphor. Yet such a concept raises all kinds of questions. A village is a close-knit community, traditionally identified by a local dialect or language which distinguishes its members from those elsewhere ... If there is to be a genuine global village, then we need to ask 'What is its dialect?', 'What are the shared features of language which give the world community of users their sense of identity?' ... Similar questions might be asked of related notions, such as 'digital citizens', 'the virtual community', and the 'Net generation'. The linguistic perspective is a critical part of this debate.

(Crystal, 2001: 6)

Pryke notes the salience of alternative networks, of local innovations and resistances – thus, the rhythms of the global cities may be 'compelling' (Pryke, 1999: 247) but they are not completely deterministic. Here, one might identify a purposeful context for a local or minority idiom.

The uneven nature of the impact of the economic rhythms of certain global cities would suggest that their reach, while remarkably extensive, is not thoroughly overwhelming. The limitations to their reach is not easily explained by either a straightforward hierarchical view of global cities nor by a simple relational position. Allen, drawing upon both Sassen and Castells, suggests as much through asserting that the power of a city 'is best understood as something which is continuously produced in various settled formations through its networked relations, and not as some locatable "reserve"' (Allen, 1999b: 185). Thus, it is in the dynamic interaction of cities and a globalising economy that the rhythms of certain global cities exert a powerful influence over other cities. But, the rhythms of cities are also shaped locally and informally, from underground. In this way, the rhythms of cities are defined by both context and flow.

According to Pile, the complexity of the social divisions (that is, the classification of people and their activities according to social, racial,

economic or other features) and spatial divisions (that is, the classification of places according to their having particular features) that characterises the city is more than a matter of the zoned organisation of social space *chez* Burgess and the Chicago school (Pile, 1999a: 35–41). Rather, the relationship between social and spatial divisions turns upon the negotiation and management of difference and its peculiar intensity in urban context: ‘urban spaces are produced through the negotiation of heterogeneity ... heterogeneity creates distinctive urban spaces that are constituted by the ways people negotiate relationships with others, the city’s spatial relationships (inside and out), and the tensions of its life’ (Pile, 1999b: 12). Such negotiations are complex, uneven and unequal and, as others have pointed out, their resolutions may be paradoxical (Sennett, 2002: 47). A relational perspective on social and spatial divisions within cities reveals the nature of the responses aimed at managing the special intensity of difference associated with cities and the ambiguous consequences of these attempts to de-intensify difference in the context of the inherent openness of urban life.

The production of differentiated urban spaces relates to social divisions in complex ways. These diverse spaces are not simply discrete and homogeneous social containers in the geographical sense; rather, they are also characterised by their connectedness and heterogeneity. As Pile (1999b: 38–9) shows, this paradox arises from the uneven and unequal nature of the connections and disconnections both within and beyond the city. Also, it is the product of the response of people to the intensity and diversity of social differences and relations both within and beyond the city. It is in the cross-cutting of these features that the variegated urban spaces of the city are constructed. For example, the inner-city spaces of Harlem in New York (from 1918 to 1929) and Sophiatown in Johannesburg (from 1955 to 1960) are shown to be characteristically ambiguous and paradoxical urban spaces (Pile, 1999b: 19–27):

Harlem and Sophiatown were both havens and hells; both were cities within a city; both established wider connections, yet both were marginal, disconnected; both came to symbolize black people’s place in the city, yet both were sites where black subjectivities were being contested and transformed.

(Pile, 1999b: 26)

The place of power in this interplay of social and spatial divisions is highlighted by Mooney in the following terms:

The existence of places of extreme wealth and affluence and the ghetto and the shanty town represent the coming together of disparate groups of people, working to sometimes very different rhythms in segregated spaces within the city. Here we have, once again, the inten-

sification of difference, underpinned by unequal power, class and social relations.

(Mooney, 1999: 87)

The evidence from various cities across the globe is that the various mechanisms (Robinson, 1999) for shaping the differentiation of city spaces such as the functioning of the land use market and its management by the state through planning policies and processes, the actions of powerful groups or institutions in society or particular strategies for 'improving' urban life contribute to the segregation of space in social terms. The mapping of race in late twentieth-century Johannesburg illustrates the possible impact of the determined operation of such mechanisms to the specific purpose of apartheid. However, it is also the case that these divisions are not wholly clear-cut. A deeper racial geography would have to account for the different meanings such divisions hold for the various actors involved. It would also have to trace the connections between the different social groups in the various parts of the city and the nature of the border crossings undertaken by many. In this way, and as Robinson (1999: 188) asserts, the social and spatial divisions within cities can also be conceived of as positively facilitating novel connections and through this the possibility for new kinds of urban spaces begins to open up afresh.

Urban regimes, responsible for the governance of urban space, are confronted with a particular set of tensions. On one level, the imposition of order in cities relates to the effective realisation of the dominant orderings of global capital, set within a neo-liberal economic discourse, in local context and in partnership with local capital and local governance (Allen *et al.*, 1999). Within the city this ordering operates through networks of influence – social, economic, cultural and political – and, in this way, a city can be successfully navigated through the ebbs and flows of the global economic system. On another level, however, such imposition of order is counter to the very nature of the city itself as a city is defined by the heightened nature of its openness, diversity and intensity (Mooney *et al.*, 1999) – its 'anarchy'. In this tension resides the crux of the relationship between urban regimes, and their task to impose order, and the various groups that comprise city life, for in each act of ordering arises a question of values – whose order (Allen, 1999b)? In all such determinations of relative values some values, and the groups who espouse them, are more equal than others. It is upon this that notions of marginalisation and resistance turn.

The notion of marginalisation relates to distance from power. Marginalisation should not be considered to be a domain occupied only by those for whom the networks of influence are largely inaccessible. Groups who normally wield power can be isolated within ordering processes under circumstances where discrete and exclusive priorities can be set and enforced.

As such, marginalisation should not be regarded as a simplistic function of hierarchy but rather as an expression of the diverse circulation of power. It is in the context of the diffuse arrangement of power that various forms of resistance are possible. And it is in this context that resistance can be defined as the means and ability to negotiate the imposition of order. Resistance takes many forms. It may be informal or formal, banal or sublime, progressive or regressive, and its very nature is shaped by and contingent upon a complex 'nexus of powers and exclusions' (Watson, 1999: 211) that operates on multiple levels and across various arenas.

With regard to the extent to which marginalised groups might effectively resist the imposition of order by urban regimes, this largely depends on how forceful the regime is prepared to be. In the case of some societies, such as apartheid South Africa or communist Eastern Europe, the regimes were very prepared indeed to impose their will, and even in these settings some resistance was possible. According to Cochrane (1999: 328–30), however, there is an increasing recognition that urban regimes function more effectively through processes of negotiation and partnership arrangements. In this context, therefore, resistance is a part of the dynamics of urban governance. Cochrane puts it as follows: 'At the heart of the debates about urban administration and governance is a tension between attempts to achieve fixity and to work or manage fluidity' (Cochrane, 1999: 328). Moving beyond traditional (that is hierarchical, technocratic and managerial) notions of what constitutes the urban regime, Massey and others (Cochrane, 1999: 328) identify an alternative approach. This, in part, derives from the concerns of regime theory with realising more inclusive forms of urban politics and policy/planning processes (Stoker, 1999). The term 'associative democracy' has been coined to give expression to a coalition of interest, capacity and shared ownership of the urban domain that is based upon an understanding of society in the city as a 'plurality of associations' (Cochrane, 1999: 329). By extension, as epitomised in the work of Jacobs (1999), the necessary diversity of a city may be sustained not only through the particular culture of its socio-political institutions and processes but also by a sympathetic physical infrastructure. According to Jacobs (1999: 340), the latter should comprise city districts that each have varied socio-economic functions, short blocks of buildings so that streets have frequent turnings and junctions enabling interaction, districts that each contain a range of buildings of different ages and condition and thereby of varying economic output, and a dense concentration of people, including residents. In this way planning processes will better reflect the organic nature of city life.

The resistance of marginalised groups to the imposition of order by urban regimes is best viewed through a set of relationships between the identity(-ies) of a city, the notion of urban citizenship, and the nature of urban democracy. Urban space is organic, multilayered and multitextured – it is not a blank canvas across which the simplistic geometries of order may

be etched. Rather, resistance is a feature consistent with the nature of city life. It is not, however, wholly anarchic; it conforms to the cultural logic of the city itself as an open and diverse entity defined by an intensity that is, in and of itself, inherently disordering.

It is something of a paradox that both chaos and patterning appear to be characteristic of the nature of cities. Approaching this paradox requires the careful reading of the intricate spatial text comprised of the intense differentiation of urban space. Thus, the qualities of disorder and order, and their complex interrelationships, are best understood in the context of the inherent openness, diversity and intensity that defines cities (Mooney *et al.*, 1999). Pile *et al.* put it as follows:

Cities are ... not entirely random assemblages of things and people ... Instead, we argue that the almost unimaginable intricacy of cities arises from both the specific ways in which they bring things and people together (i.e. the mixings and meetings of cities), and also from the ways in which cities are built to sort, sift and segregate things and people (i.e. the patternings and orderings of cities).

(Pile *et al.*, 1999: 1)

Thereby, cities are defined by a chaotic patterning, a complex set of 'jumbled orderings' (Mooney *et al.*, 1999: 348). Interwoven in these jumbled orderings is power and its uneven and unequal impacts. In this context, it becomes clear that notions of order and disorder are not absolute and objective categories but rather are value-laden terms defined by relationships to power, and inherent to the range of processes that result in spatial differentiation in cities is a sense of ambiguity with regard to a simplistic dichotomy of order and disorder.

Stoker's work on regime theory suggests that conceiving of (dis)order in this manner can have practical applications in real terms (Stoker, 1999). He asserts that in recognising the reality of diversity and disorder in cities it is possible to transcend the attritional ecology of fear, exclusion and violence. This is achieved by moving away from perspectives on power that place emphasis upon its hierarchical petrification – that is, power as a means of social control – and moving towards a view of power as a manifestation of social production. Thus, power is enabling and inclusive rather than constraining and exclusive; for example:

Regime theory provides a new perspective on the issue of power. It directs attention away from a narrow focus on power as an issue of social control towards an understanding of power expressed through social production. In a complex, fragmented urban world the paradigmatic form of power is that which enables certain interests to blend their capacities to achieve common purposes.

(Stoker, 1999: 324)

It is recognised (Cochrane, 1999) that such approaches to the social problems of city life do not easily incorporate the real social tensions that exist in cities. It is the case that the plurality of associations in any given city is also cross-cut by unequal and uneven power relationships. If a resolution resides in a radical reworking of civic leadership (Cochrane, 1999) then that must be premised on the recognition of the endemic nature of disorder in city life. In this way, the resolution of social problems in cities does not lie in the replacement of disorder by order but is instead to be approached through an understanding of order that positively accommodates disorder. The intense diversity that defines urban life is almost inevitably manifest in contestations of the purpose and meaning of city spaces – to paraphrase Sennett (1999), disorder is a necessary, even desirable, feature of the social function of urban space: ‘conflict (i.e. disorder) ... [is the] ... desirable product of people seeking to govern themselves’ (Sennett, 1999: 366). Moreover, Sennett asserts that the social problems can only be addressed through allowing for conflict and disorder: ‘When conflict is permitted in the public sphere, when the bureaucratic routines become socialized, the product of disorder will be a greater sensitivity in public life to the problems of connecting public services to the urban clientele’ (Sennett, 1999: 366). Thus, the multilayered and multitextured space that is the city cannot be triangulated by simplistic geometries of order. Neither is disorder wholly anarchic – the source of urban social problems. It is instead a feature consistent with the very nature of city life. Disorder conforms to the cultural logic of the city itself as an open and diverse entity defined by an intensity that is, in and of itself, inherently disordering. Therefore, it is in the power-etched relationships within (dis)order that the nature of social problems in the city is best understood. And it is in the accommodation of the contestations and resistances necessary to those relationships, Sennett’s ‘equilibrium of disorder’ (Sennett, 1999: 364), that the possibilities for their amelioration may be identified.

There is no clear dichotomy between order and disorder in the city. Rather, such matters turn upon questions of relative, rather than absolute, values. More than anything else, perhaps, (dis)order is a question of power, and while the particularities of the various ordering and disordering impulses may diverge their common denominator is power and its uneven impact upon city life. The social tensions that result from this uneven circulation of power are manifest in complex relationships of inequality and their intimate juxtaposing across urban space. Solutions to the social problems of cities, relating to the intense diversity that defines urban life and expressed in the myriad contestations of the purpose and meaning of city spaces, are best approached from this perspective. Effectively addressing this unevenness and inequality requires the adoption of instruments for the negotiation of difference through the positive engagement of the manifold worlds that comprise the city. It is in such processes of the negotiation of difference that the particular nature of urban spatial-

ity is constantly 'produced, maintained, challenged and transformed' (Mooney *et al.*, 1999: 346). That is to say, it is through the accommodation and reaccommodation of (dis)order – understood as inclusive democracy, robust contestation and the diverse animation of power – that conceptions, as well as resolutions, of urban social problems are to be arrived at.

Conclusions

In a globalising world, language policy-makers and language planners are currently confronted by a number of important challenges with regard to the Irish language in Ireland. These can be formulated as a series of key questions: What is the Irish language community and how to engage with it? What is the public consensus on the Irish language and is it sufficiently dynamic? Is there a purposeful and practical civic identity to the Irish language? What role do, and should, cities play in the trajectory of language shift? This brief examination of three areas – community-based language planning, ethnicity and citizenship, and the city – may be read as a contribution to the emergence of a discourse on the Irish language that seeks to engage with the challenge of securing the continuity of the Irish language in a society upon which the impacts of globalisation are various and uneven. Such shifts as the devolution of power in the realm of language planning from centres of governance to local communities, forging a new relationship between citizenship and the Irish language which transcends the traditional nationalist or unionist mantra, recognising the limitations of the Gaeltacht and the potential of the city with regard to the sustainability of the Irish language, all entail risk. But, in order to escape the atrophy that is the fate of all languages about to die, risk is a strategic necessity.

9 Conclusions

The public discourse on Irish language policy in Ireland is only partly shaped by informed social scientific opinion (Ó Riagáin and Tovey, 2000). It is also shaped by subjective imaginings of the place of the language in Irish society. For example, the contemporary sense of the vulnerability of the language is captured by the poet Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill in certain, short lines:

Cuirim mo dhóchas ar snámh i mbáidín teangan ... féachaint
n'fheadaraís cá dtabharfaidh an sruth é, féachaint, dála Mhaoise,
an bhfóirfidh iníon Fhorainn? [Trans. Paul Muldoon: I place my hope
on the water in this little boat of the language ... only to have it
borne hither and thither, not knowing where it might end up; in the
lap, perhaps, of some Pharaoh's daughter.]

(Ní Dhomhnaill, 1990: 154)

Thus, the story of the Irish language is both intimate and epic, but unfinished, its fate as yet indeterminate. The Irish language is not dead, nor is it likely to expire for some time. Indeed, according to various indices, and in contrast to 90 per cent of the world's languages, the immediate future of the Irish language is secure (McCloskey, 2001: 44–5). However, the sustainability of the language is contingent upon a number of factors. Recognising the historical reality of the Irish language is one such factor. For example, it is the case that the Irish language was introduced to Ireland by an incoming people and therefore its historical relationship to Ireland is contingent upon historical circumstance and is not a primordial symbiosis. The most archaic term for the language, *goídelc*, and for a speaker of that language, *goídel*, were notions constructed and names ascribed by ethno-linguistic others. Also, a charting of the vicissitudes in the relationships between the Irish language and the various historical and contemporary ethnic identities in Ireland reveals that myriad attachments have been, and are being, formed, reformed and dislocated. The ethnic cartography of the Irish language has a complex geometry. Likewise, the relationships between the Irish language and other languages in Ireland have a very

dynamic history. The social evolution of Irish and the co-evolution of languages in Ireland are characterised by numerous shifts to and fro, subtle and substantial, sometimes reinforcing the vitality of the Irish language and sometimes undermining it. The onset of modernity was a most profound moment for the Irish language and is crucial to understanding the current state of the language. The pronounced and protracted contraction of the Irish language from key social domains from this historical juncture explains how Irish becomes the language of marginalisation, powerlessness, poverty and illiteracy in modern Ireland. The dramatic intervention of Irish nationalism towards the end of the twentieth century and the elevation of the Irish language as the national language and, subsequently, to the status of the official language of an Irish nation-state, is paradoxical. While elevating the language it also served to reduce the language to the condition of an atrophic icon of a monolithic notion of Irish national identity. The language gained the constitutional status of national and official language without that having any significant practical implications for Irish-speaking citizens and their rights. The relentless contraction and fragmentation of the Gaeltacht during the course of the twentieth century underscores the inescapable conclusion that Irish-speakers did not benefit from equal social citizenship in that Irish nation-state. Thus, the elevation was rhetorical and the reduction practical. A further paradox is situated in relation to the North in Ireland. The late twentieth-century conflict in NI was one of the impulses for the revisionist project which deconstructed Irish nationalism as a myth-driven, exclusivist and destructive ideology. Yet the conflict in the North has many levels to it, and the revival of the Irish language in the region is a remarkable signifier of that complexity. The resurgence of Irish in NI is limited but dynamic – it is city-based but relates to the notion of the Gaeltacht; it may be understood in the context of Irish nationalism but also as a means of attachment to senses of Irishness for non-nationalists; it exists despite the state but seeks an identity within its institutions. Irish society is changing dramatically and the place of the Irish language must change with it. The polemics of the Irish language in a globalising Ireland must engage with the following:

- The complexity of the all-Ireland political dispensation for the Irish language, the reshaping of polity and the associated strategic architecture comprising the institutions of state and related policy instruments.
- The institutional and policy tension regarding contrastive conceptions of the Irish-speaker as a client-citizen and as a consumer, as a passive recipient of services or as an active choice-maker. This includes the need to embed the notion of equality according to individual needs within public institutions through recognising the autonomy of the individual, while at the same time identifying the responsibilities of the individual. Thus, the notions of the linguistic market and of

language choice are to be understood, along with the role of the state in intervening to restrict monopoly.

- A shift in political ideology from traditional Irish nationalist rhetoric to a post-colonial perspective in which the Irish language is a dynamic emblem of the diversity of Irish identities and through which the Irish language has a purposeful status with practical implications.
- The transcending of the ethnic – civic dichotomy whereby the Irish language gains a meaningful civic identity as a social reality of governance and of public institutions.
- The need to be critical of the power exercised by institutions and their disposition towards the consolidation of unequal relations of power and, as a result, the desirability for the wider circulation of power amongst bureaucrats, professionals, experts and the local Irish-speaking communities.
- A recognition that the official Gaeltacht is too narrow a niche for a sustainable future for the Irish language and that, in any case, the actual ecology of the language is broader than that. It includes Irish-speaking networks beyond the Gaeltacht and, in particular, in the city.

As the modern past of the Irish language was profoundly shaped by a fateful encounter with empire, so the postmodern future of the language will be determined by its emergent relationship to a post-colonial Ireland in a globalising world. This is, in a sense, the Pharaoh's daughter – Irish society in its full complexity and diversity; and it is in its hands, of Irish-speakers and non-Irish-speakers alike, that the life and the death of the Irish language rests.

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